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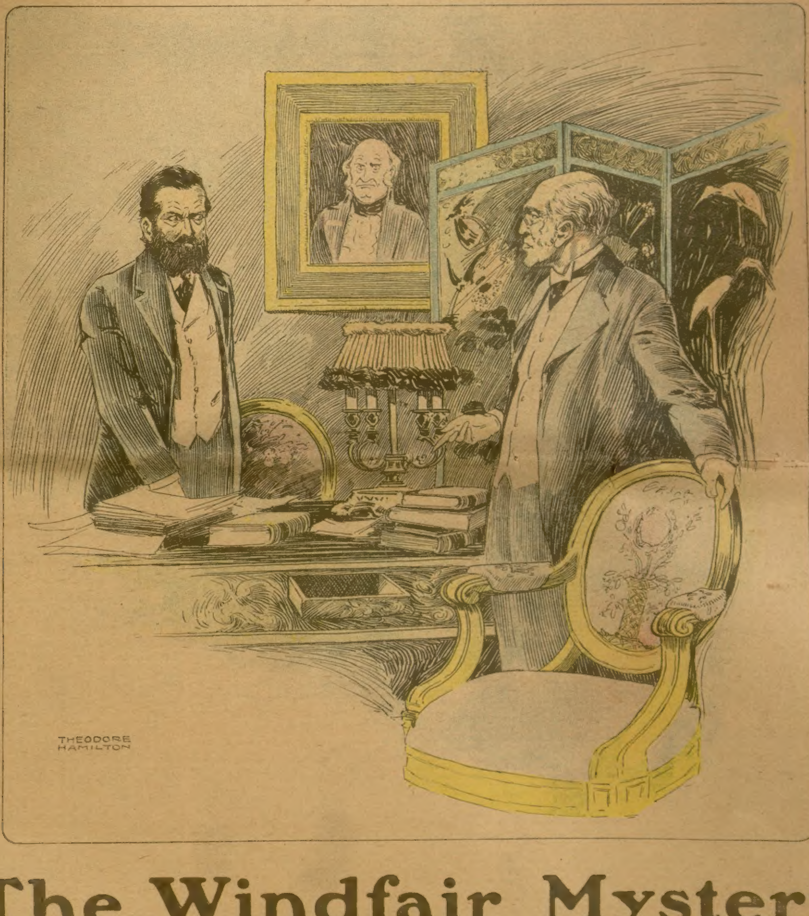

The Windfair Mystery

-:- Or -:-

Keeneyes in Disguise

By J. Breckenridge Ellis

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CHAPTER I.

AS HE stepped from the train to the station platform, he looked all about with curious, eager gaze, but saw little to recognize. Since his last visit there, some twenty years ago, a new station had been erected, houses had been built, other railroads had laid their tracks parallel and crosswise to that familiar line which had brought him from the city. Bridge Junction had not, in the old days, possessed for him any interest save as the point of intersection of the city line and the branch road running down to his home town, Windfair. Now, however, he saw everything with the consuming fever of one coming back after a long enforced absence, and it pleased him to discover that the river shore, along which the junction town straggled, was just as it had been in his nineteenth year.

A commodious hotel faced the station, and he went thither slowly, intending to pass the three hours of waiting—the train for Windfair was not due until two in the afternoon—in and about the new structure; and as he crossed the street, he observed, with his curious, eager gaze, that only one other person from the train had in mind the same destination. He wondered if the short, middle-aged man intended to go on to Windfair, and if they used to know each other; and he kept his face turned another way from an instinctive dread of being recognized—altho that day in the city he had come face to face with a boyhood chum who stared and passed on without a suspicion of his identity.

The last time he had seen Bridge Junction, he had been marched away under guard with handcuffs on his wrists. It seemed odd to stroll into the lobby of a big hotel built on the site of the long-ago frame inn, and register an assumed name for dinner. As he did so his pulses beat more rapidly at the reflection that before the June twilight fell he would be standing at some hotel desk in Windfair, writing the same name in the same disguised hand—in Windfair where he was born and reared, where he had been known by every man and woman of its two thousand inhabitants, where he had loved with the passion of youth and had suffered as only youth can suffer.

Altho he still averted his face, he watched to see what name would be registered by the man who had come on the same train from the city; and when he found it unknown—Harold Kellogg—his cautious attitude became indifferent. He would have liked to know if Harold Kellogg meant to go to Windfair, and if so, whether or not he knew the older inhabitants—the woman who had promised to be his wife; her father, who had used his money to crush him by means of a shameful lawsuit; the successful rival who had married her triumphantly. But of course, granting that Kellogg knew them, he could not have asked anything, since he was going back as a stranger.

There seemed nothing unusual in Harold Kellogg's appearance, and yet he held one's attention closely. They were of almost the same height and weight—low and slender—and each showed the same quiet deliberation of movement, with the same quick, covert side-glances, as if ever on the watch. Their hair and eyes were alike thick and dark, and their garments similar. But their faces were utterly unlike, for whereas Kellogg's was lean and clean-shaven, the other's was so heavily mustached, so overgrown with thick whiskers that his features were not clearly discernible. Of the two, Kellogg would have been by far the less noticeable but for a certain burning of the eyes denoting hidden, possibly desperate, purpose.

Kellogg remained in the waiting-room not longer than five minutes, then picking up his only baggage, a small grip, started away as if to take a survey of Bridge Junction to while away the time until noon. The other followed, but not as if with the intention of following. In fact, he did not know why he felt this impulse to keep Kellogg in sight, unless from curiosity to discover the reason for that haunting, feverish stare—a burning of eyes like the visible expression of his own emotions. Was he, too, an escaped convict? Had he, too, been unjustly accused, and declared guilty by those who should never have doubted his innocence?

Kellogg walked briskly thru the small town, and the other, still following, was [illegible] conclusions: First, Kellogg was interested in nothing that he saw, and second, he had a definite spot in view toward which he was hastening with resolution if not with eagerness. This spot was about half a mile from the station, for it was here that he came to his first halt.

The man with the heavy black mustache and thick abundant whiskers stepped cautiously among some trees, the first in a small wood that ran down to the river. Here he watched unobserved, always wondering at himself that he who should be the hunted one had become the spy, and that because of no clear purpose, from no reason except that the look in the lean, dark, clean-shaven face had suggested kinship in misfortune.

The man he was watching slipped noiselessly down to the bank, looking about him from time to time. The shore reached, he took off his coat, drew from it a letter, pinned the letter to the coat, and placed it in a conspicuous place on the ground at the margin of the well-worn footpath.

Without a pause he then passed on down the footpath which made a loop, and came out beyond the wood at the foot of the railroad bridge. He climbed the bridge and stepped lightly from tie to tie—for there was no accommodation for pedestrians—and paused only when he had reached midstream. Never stopping to consider or to rest, he walked to the end of a beam that projected beyond the ordinary tie's length, and sat down on the extreme end. While looking carefully about in all directions, he opened the grip with which he had helped balance himself while walking the ties, drew from it an object, then snapped it shut and dropped it into the stream.

The splash and the instant disappearance proved that the grip had been filled with some heavy substance for this very object.

The owner of the grip did not pause even to watch it disappear, but at once—as if every instant were precious—grasped and drew aloft the object which alone he had saved from the river. There was a quick flash of sunlight on a long, polished blade; then a gushing stream of crimson as the terrific slash of the knife cut the suicide's throat almost from ear to ear; then the dizzy plunge of a convulsed body; a loud and sinister splash; silence.

The watcher had not moved. From the position he had first taken, he had been able to see everything, yet could have prevented nothing. Until the flash of light on steel he had not understood the other's purpose, but had it been otherwise, who was he to interfere? Perhaps the wretch was suffering as he had suffered, from some horribly unjust accusation; perhaps the dead man had by voluntary death escaped capture, had cut short a long term of imprisonment imposed by a blind court.

The body did not rise to the surface. It might have been caught in the half-submerged trees that grew below the banks—it might have been washed far away by the swiftly flowing current. It might never be seen again, or, if seen, never recognized. Evidently that had been the hope of the suicide, hence it was certain nothing would be found on his body to aid identification.

The solitary figure among the trees stood perfectly motionless while five, ten, fifteen minutes passed by. Still he was alone. No one had appeared on the woodland footpath, no living form had shown itself near the railroad bridge or in the country road that passed over the distant hill. Listening, he could not hear even the song of a bird; all nature was quiet but for the ceaseless lapping of the river.

Tho he did not move during the quarter-hour, he was thinking intently, excitedly—and at the end of that time, suddenly galvanized to swift life, he leaped down the path, snatched up the coat, tore from it the letter, and ran into a denser part of the wood, out of sight of the path, carrying his booty.

Hiding himself as best he might from possible surprise, he studied the address on the envelope, then tore open the letter and read intently:

"Jennie: When you read this letter I shall be gone. No use trying to find me, but do not solace yourself with the fancy that you can ever be secure from the reach of my influence. The husband you have wronged in secret a hundred times, the husband who knows you to be untrue, does not care to make himself ridiculous in the courts. So he disappears. But do not think to enjoy a moment's peace. For you will never know at what hour in the day, or still better, in the dead of night, you may expect to see me rise up in your path, or stand at your bedside to strangle you as I had not the courage to do last evening. When I come back, you will find me bolder. I shall place my coat where it can be easily found, and pin this envelope upon it with the request that it be forwarded to my wife. People will imagine I have drowned myself in the river. It will be convenient for you to pretend to think as they think—but all the time you will know what I have written. You will never enjoy another day's peace. Your lover will grow hateful to you. Terror will become your guest. I shall be avenged.

"HAROLD KELLOGG."

CHAPTER II.

UP TO the moment of the final reading of the suicide's letter, he had formed no plans for the future. True, an idea, doubtless inspired by something once heard or seen on the stage, had prompted him to snatch up the coat and hide it in the bushes, but this idea presented no details of practical application.

Certainly it would not prevent his purpose of returning to his old home town where he meant to escape recognition, but in a vague way he fancied that it might assist him somehow in concealing his identity. But how? By taking the place of the dead man? They were not alike except in form and complexion. If his beard were shaved off, his hair cut close, he could not expect to look like the stranger, and worse than that, he would look more like his old self. No one in Windfair had ever seen him with mustache and whiskers, and twenty years might not have changed him as completely as he sometimes believed—as he always desired.

Having read the letter, he knew a good deal about Harold Kellogg. He had killed himself because of his wife's unfaithfulness; on the very evening before there had been a scene, perhaps a discovery of her perfidy, and he had abstained from violence from lack of what he called "courage." But he was resolved that she should derive no satisfaction from his death. She was to believe him alive, hidden, waiting to spring upon her by day, or "still better, in the dead of night." It did not seem fair, this lying vengeance of a dead man!

Had Harold Kellogg supposed the letter would be sent to his wife unopened, unquestioned? Or was it part of his sinister plan that its contents, professedly private, should be made known to all the world? In either case, no suspicion of suicide would be aroused unless his body were found. That, of course, was possible, but if the current had swept it away thru the thinly settled country there was little likelihood that, if found, the mutilated and discolored corpse would be identified. Perhaps Kellogg had worn garments unlike his usual ones, had carried in vest and trouser pockets misleading clews. It was certain that his coat did not match the rest of his suit, and this was true of the man who now folded up the letter and placed it carefully in his bosom—and it seemed equally certain that his had not been the same reason for the dissimilarity, namely, an abnormal fondness for any detail to mark his difference from former days.

No, this coat was Kellogg's coat, and the clothes on the dead body now being driven far away between fleeing shores would never betray Kellogg. So far, so good. And if Kellogg's coat, it must contain other evidences of identification, evidences conclusive but without inherent value to the tempting of possible thieves.

He made a minute examination of the pockets. There was a white silk handkerchief marked by the initial "K," a pencil in a silver pencil-holder that opened and shut, of curious design but unlettered, and half a dozen envelopes containing letters or printed notices, all but one addressed to Mr. Harold Kellogg, with the same street and number in St. Louis to which Kellogg had addressed his last missive to his wife.

The note not addressed to Kellogg was the one that instantly claimed his attention, because the name it bore was that of a man who had played a fatal part in the tragedy of his youth. The superscription read:

MR. WILLIAM PETTYBERG,
Windfair, Ill.
Introducing Mr. H. Kellogg.

Swiftly he opened the unsealed note and devoured its contents with heaving breast, as if the mere reading of words addressed to that man who had blighted his life was a nerve-racking experience.

"Mr. William Pettyberg,
"Windfair, Ill.

"Dear Sir: This will introduce to you Mr. Harold Kellogg, who was out of the city when you called for our assistance. According to your request, which was in full accord with our wishes, we thought it best to wait these three days that we might have the very best man at our disposal to work on your case. Mr. Kellogg is one of the shrewdest and most successful men not only of our detective agency, but of any other, and we recommend him unreservedly, subject to the terms already agreed upon.

"Very truly yours,
"JASPER DOANE, Chief,
"The Doane Detective Agency."

On the first reading of this note of introduction, its full significance did not at once present itself to his mind. He understood that William Pettyberg had engaged a detective from St. Louis to work on a mystery case, and that that detective had committed suicide before having come face to face with his prospective employer; but it did not occur to him then that he might impersonate the detective and go to Pettyberg in that assumed character.

It was his purpose to go to Windfair, and of course meet Pettyberg and all those others who had entered most intimately into the story of his early manhood, and it was equally his purpose to avoid recognition, but thus far he had not decided upon just what part he should play.

He turned to the other letters in the dead man's pocket. They seemed to be of no especial or personal interest to Harold Kellogg, but he put each slowly into his pocket, not knowing but he might find each of use—for already a plan was beginning to form itself, and it took shape swiftly. If he went to Windfair as "Harold Kellogg," no one would know of the deception for at least several days, probably a week or two. It might be dangerous to linger longer than that, but if the nature of the "case" called for careful and methodical work, the home office would not grow impatient. Besides, he could postpone a meeting between him and his chief by writing an occasional note to ward it off—here was Kellogg's letter to Mrs. Kellogg, furnishing a convenient copy for imitation.

As "Harold Kellogg," his presence in Windfair would be accounted for—no slight detail when one goes to a small town—and as a private detective, he would be introduced into the intimacy of the Pettyberg family—above everything else, that which he most desired. What mystery could possibly have induced the staid and dignified, not to say pompous, William Pettyberg, to call in the assistance of a detective? Its nature was not such as to have demanded instant attention, else the office would not have waited three days to secure a picked man.

It could not, he decided, be a murder case. Was it one of theft? And if so, did it resemble that robbery that had been the cause of all his misfortunes? As he reflected, the blood burned in his cheeks and his eyes glittered in mad excitement. Was Providence about to reward him for the fearful injury he had received from circumstantial evidence? He pictured fondly to himself a scene in which, acting as Pettyberg's detective, he should uncover the real criminal in whose stead he had been sent to the penitentiary. What an irony of fate if the thief of twenty years ago should prove the thief of today, and if he, in discovering the man, should prove his own innocence and the guilt of——

But after all, the case might be altogether different from that of his imagination. Of course, it was natural for him to think instinctively of thieves when mystery was mentioned. After all, no matter what the occasion of the detective's call to Windfair, the main point was this; Should he go thither, pretending to be that detective, and could he expect his deception to prove successful?

Already he had resolved upon the hazardous adventure. To be discovered would mean a return to the penitentiary from which he had escaped sixteen years ago, there to work out the rest of a ten years' sentence of which only four had been completed. And what would he gain if suspicions were avoided? Only a brief anomalous association with half a dozen people who had once made up his life—or, to narrow it down to its essential—a week or two of nearness with the woman he could not forget.

He had not been able to forget her when toiling with aching back, ready to shriek aloud to hear a human voice as he worked in the convicts' mines. He had not forgotten her during the sixteen years of flight and hiding with their restless changes from State to State, their varied disguises in many cities and in lonely country places. And now it seemed worth the risk to be near her for a brief time once more. He might find her so altered that his love would vanish. Her marriage to his rival had not been able to banish his love; her belief in his guilt, her cold silence, had affected nothing in that direction. Perhaps a glimpse of her daily life would still the fever of his heart. Should it prove so, he believed it would be well for him; and if it proved otherwise, still he would have heard her voice once more, and seen the grace of her passing form. After that he felt ready for any fate.

He had waited sixteen years, for not until now had he thought himself sufficiently changed to be safe among former friends. This problem confronted him: If he shaved off his beard, would it not restore the features of his youth? And if he retained his beard, how could he expect to pass for the clean-shaven detective?

To be sure, Pettyberg had never seen Kellogg; but a detective from the city as hairy as a wild bear might at once startle him to vague uneasiness. Then came a new thought: Why might not his long hair and heavy beard and mustache seem to Pettyberg an excellent disguise? No one could look less like a detective—therefore Pettyberg must accept him as one of the very best.

He started up—his resolve was taken. Having fastened a heavy stone to the coat, he threw it far out into the river, where it sank at once. Then, with the gliding, stealthy motion he had acquired from years of fugitive life, he returned to the hotel.

His suitcase stood under the writing table just as it had been left. There was nothing in its appearance to suggest the character of its owner, and he decided to carry it with him, pleased that he had not labeled it with the fictitious name he had signed on the registry, and resolving at the first opportunity to cut his new initials—"H. K."—on the leather.

He was late to dinner, and dined alone accordingly, attended by a supercilious and gum-chewing young lady who gave him as little attention as possible. When he rose from the table, she did, however, bestow upon him a look of interest as she asked:

"Do you know whether or not that other feller is coming for his dinner?"

He returned quickly, "I know nothing about it." Then he was sorry he had not pretended to be at a loss, that he had not returned, "What fellow do you mean?"

"Well," she said, with a shrug, "I seen you go out with him. I thought you'd know what become of him."

"I did not go out with anybody," he said emphatically. He looked at her squarely, defiantly, suspiciously.

She shrugged and began to clear away his table.

"I did not go out with anybody," he

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repeated, as he moved toward the lobby.

He wished she would say something, either by way of contradiction or in acceptance of his statement. He wanted her to admit that his having gone out the door immediately behind the clean-shaven man had been a mere coincidence.

But the waitress went on with her work, clinking the dishes noisily, and he was forced to withdraw in silence. After all, what did it matter?

CHAPTER III.

IT WAS about seven o'clock that same June evening when his train approached the outskirts of the last town on the branch road—Windfair. As it thundered past unsightly outbuildings and barnyards and roared across empty cross-streets, he drew his breath as if inhaling the most exquisite of perfumes, as indeed he was—the fragrance of a happy past.

His eyes watched everything hungrily, recognizing the backs of barns, the rear porches of ancient cottages, the very slopes of the sidewalks and altho Windfair presented as ugly a picture as the average American village, town, or city presents to the incoming train, he found it all beautiful, inspiring, blood-tingling.

He was the first man on his feet in the aisle, and when the train stopped with the time-honored American jerk, his was the first form to flash upon the station platform. After twenty years, station and platform were unchanged. the one the same conventional structure of gritty walls to defy pencil-scribbling youths, the latter of the same thick planks. He recognized the station agent, too. older, but with the same grim, mechanical features.

The hack driver, he was glad to note, had grown up since his time, and he let him take his suitcase with a feeling of confidence. Then reflecting that he would be thrown with those much more likely than the driver to penetrate his disguise, and that his present sense of relief was an indication of cowardice, he turned and boldly accosted the station agent. The agent did not recognize him, and snubbed him as brusquely as he was accustomed to snub all strangers. Pleased with this result, tho it was precisely what he had counted upon when undertaking his hazardous adventure, he directed the hackman to drive him to Mr. William Pettyberg's.

He had thought much about the danger of a voice betrayal. Naturally, he spoke in a deep, bass voice, and his first impulse had been to adopt one of a light and shallow tone, speaking from the throat rather than from the chest. But when practicing the falsetto it sounded in his ears not only absurd, as coming from his sturdy form, but artificial. He had hit upon what he considered a medium shade, and this new voice he had been using habitually for the past six months. It studiously avoided the flexibility and musical timbre of his old-time voice, a voice that had been one of his greatest charms as a young man. He felt sure he could speak without arousing memories in those who had known him long ago, but at the same time he recognized with regret that the new voice sounded unsympathetic, even cold. That could not be helped; he had far better be disliked than recognized.

When the hack bumped and rattled up before his destination, he was lightheaded from the thrilling experiences of the ride. Tho late, the sun had not yet set, and everything seen along the way had been thrown into golden light and dreamy shadows—the homes so familiar; the figures on the sidewalks, many of them known to him, particularly those of the older men; the same vacant lots still vacant; the same garden spots; the beloved turnings and twistings of the roads. He had loved it all, or so he now believed; certainly he had dreamed of it by day and night, in prison, in dark hiding-places.

And this large brick Pettyberg residence—it had been the dearest of all, because it had housed the only woman he had ever loved. Up yonder had been her room; on that piazza they had often met and parted; yonder in the side yard had swung her hammock, and here at the gate they had said good night—their last fond parting, so full of ambitious hopes, so unsuspecting of the blow about to fall.

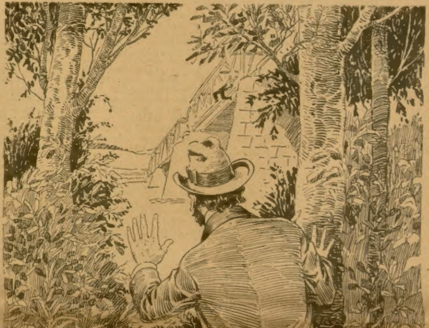
Very slowly, suitcase in hand, he passed thru the gate and up the neat brick walk to the steps, and as he advanced he drank in everything with thirsty eyes, experiencing a fierce joy, and at the same time, a scarcely controllable terror.

Seeing the front door opened, he felt hot flashing pains that seemed to dart to his heart's core—if it were she! But no, the one who stepped out upon the porch was an elderly man, thin and erect, silver-haired and white-bearded. He leaned upon a cane, but tho much weaker, there was the same pride, the same stiffness, the same self-confidence which so easily passed into overbearing haughtiness.

He looked intently at the newcomer, and the moment of terrible danger had come. "Can this be——?" asked the well-remembered voice of authority.

"Harold Kellogg," said the other, stopping in the walk as if hesitating between advance and flight.

"I looked for a much younger man," said Mr. Pettyberg, frowning. He added as in censure, "Surely you are 50, at least."



A loud and sinister splash, then silence.

The other did not dispute this assertion; indeed, he tacitly accepted it as one more means of escaping identification. Silently he handed the old man the letter of introduction.

After Mr. Pettyberg had read it word by word, he again looked searchingly at the bearer of the letter.

"Permit me to observe," said the newcomer in that hard, clear-cut voice of recent birth, "that mysteries are best solved when no one knows a detective is at work, and that possibly I look very different when I am at the St. Louis office."

"Ah!" breathed Mr. Pettyberg, with a look of relief. "Of course—how foolish of me not to understand! A disguise—excellent! And even if all that hair belonged to you, I should have perfect confidence in your chief. Pray follow me."

Suddenly the other felt a keen sense of safety. They had conversed, he was not suspected, the scheme was working finely. He said:

"I'll leave my suitcase on the porch, and after our conference no doubt you can recommend to me some hotel in this strange town. You will reflect that I am quite unknown in Windfair."

"Leave your suitcase there, by all means," returned the master of the house, kindly, "but you are not going to a hotel. The man will take it up to your room which is already prepared for you. The nature of the case, as you can readily understand——"

"Pardon me," returned the other, following into the hall, "but I know nothing of the case."

Mr. Pettyberg stopped in amazement. "What! Chief Doane has not explained?"

"The fact is," was the careful response, "Chief Donne has found the best results to come from a first-hand knowledge of his detectives with their mystery cases. Therefore, when possible, a detective is always sent to the employer with a mind perfectly blank as regards that particular case."

"Indeed? No doubt that is a wise policy. At any rate it cannot interfere with results in this instance, for I can soon enlighten you. But owing to the nature of this mystery, it will, I feel, be absolutely necessary for you to occupy a room in this house until the mystery is solved. You will not object, I hope, to accept my hospitality, since it is entirely in the way of business."

"Since you wish it, I can have no possible objection." And he found it hard to subdue the triumphant joy that almost cried aloud for utterance.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. PETTYBERG'S was a square double house, with each of the two stories cut into equal parts by a hall, whose outside doors at front and rear opened upon wide porches. The first downstairs room on the right was a combination of library and gentleman's lounging-room, and into this the master of the house at once conducted his guest.

"If you do not need to rest up from your journey," he said, "I should like to go at once into the details of the mystery."

The other could hardly have demurred had he been ever so weary or hungry, for Mr. Pettyberg's seeming deference to the wishes of others was always in reality a veiled issuance of orders. Well did the newcomer remember that from of old, but now that he was as eager to hear as the other could be to speak, he felt keenly alert, forgetful of the fact that he had eaten nothing since his hasty dinner at Bridge Junction.

They sat down facing each other, presenting a marked contrast—Mr. Pettyberg old beyond his 65 years, elegant and distinguished of dress and bearing, the other, who was to be known in that household as "Harold Kellogg," plainly garbed, somewhat evasive of manner and uncertain of eye, amazingly bewhiskered, with long dark hair falling over his collar.

"I went to St. Louis a week ago to secure the services of an expert detective," Mr. Pettyberg began. He read once more Chief Doane's letter of introduction, then continued, "And I am here advised that you, Mr. Kellogg, are 'one of the shrewdest and most successful men' on his force. That is as it should be, for under the circumstances, only the best could be of any service to me." He added abruptly. "It is a case of persistent robbery."

"Kellogg" started, but recovered himself at once, and waited in silence.

"Two years ago," Mr. Pettyberg resumed, "this house was entered in a manner unknown, some time during the night. The thief or thieves took, on that occasion, a sum of money—three hundred and fifty dollars—from this secret drawer——"

He rose, stepped to a massive table beside a revolving bookcase and touched a spring. A narrow, empty drawer shot into view, at which "Kellogg" gazed with bated breath, his head stretched forward, his body in the cramped position of one about to spring. Mr. Pettyberg, unaware of his excitement, returned the drawer in place, and resumed his seat.

"The loss of the money I did not so much mind; but the fact that the house could be entered and left without the making of a single mark as a clew, and that the knowledge of this secret drawer was shared with my family by some unscrupulous villain, upon my word, sir, it could scarcely be borne!"

He paused to catch his breath, for anger had taken possession of his emaciated frame, and his eyes glared. "Come, come," he told himself, "this will not do!" Then he went on, more calmly: "Six months later the house was again entered, just as mysteriously. This time, there was, bless my soul! a wholesale ransacking, a veritable looting of the premises. The villain or villains entered my daughter's bedroom and literally stripped it of her garments—dresses, shoes, hats, everything. My son-in-law's priceless violin was stolen. My clothes were left, but my watch was taken from under my pillow along with my revolver, and my money was stripped from my pockets. The cook was robbed of her hoard—her savings of years. My cousin, the only other occupant of the house, lost her trunk—yes, sir, her trunk with everything, of course, in it."

He paused to glare at his guest, who offered no comment.

"Of course we made a great outcry, but it did no good. We discovered nothing except the track of wheels to tell us the booty had been driven off, which we would have known, anyhow, for nothing but an elephant or camel could of itself have carried away spoils so extensive. This was eighteen months ago. After that, we were given a respite, fortunately, for if that thing had continued I believe I should have gone mad, quite mad. Of course, for some time after the outrage we took turns in guarding the house and such treasures as we dared keep in it. Also we hired nightwatchmen. But the months passed, and we grew tired of watching, as men always will. At last it seemed no use to anticipate trouble. We grew lax. We became as other householders. Then, a new outrage!"

"At what time?" inquired "Kellogg," feeling that he should say something.

"This third crime was committed three months ago. There had been peace and immunity from the vandals for more than an entire year. Then, three months back, the wretches were at their work again." And he blew a loud breath as if to get rid of a vast quantity of superfluous steam.

"Yes, sir, three months ago, back came the miscreants—of course we were off our guard. Good heavens! What would life be worth if we must sit up every night to keep our clothes by our bedsides? Three months ago the house was entered in the same baffling way. And what do you suppose went this time? The piano! How could it have been abstracted without noise? Don't ask me. The piano, my daughter's prized and highly expensive instrument—yes, it vanished as by magic. Nothing else was touched that night. Just the upright piano. What could we do? Nothing!"

"It sounds like a conspiracy against you," murmured the listener.

"Certainly that is what it is. No other house in Windfair is molested. Why am I the only one attacked, and why am I harassed so persistently? Of course it is a conspiracy. The next outrage—and the last—took place last week. Back they came, into the house they crept at dead of night, and this time simple robbery was not sufficient. My son-in-law heard the noise below—he rushed downstairs without stopping to put on any clothing—and in the hall near the door he found the cook stabbed and unconscious, or almost so."

"She was killed?"

"No, the wound was not fatal, but she bled dreadfully. It seems she had heard the noise first and had gone to investigate. Some one attacked her, and would surely have killed her but for my son-in-law's appearance on the scene."

"Then she recovered?"

"Yes, sufficiently to do her work; but she was badly cut by a knife or razor."

"What does she say about the man who attacked her?"

"He must have slipped up behind her. She declares she doesn't know who did it, that she saw nobody but my son-in-law. Now, sir, what am I to think of all this? And in a peaceable, old-fashioned river town, where such crimes were unheard of before my persecution began! And what am I to do? But I must control myself or I shall quite lose my wits. Mr. Kellogg, I place the whole affair in your hands. Probe it to the depths. Assume authority in this house, tell us what you propose, what you want us to say or think, how we must act. During these past two years we have proved ourselves unable to care for ourselves, and you have been sent for to take care of us. Find the man or men who have made life miserable for us all, who have brought misunderstanding between my daughter and son-in-law, and between my son-in-law and my cousin, and between my cousin and our faithful old family servant, the cook. Perhaps it is only human nature that, not knowing whom to suspect, we have finished by suspecting one another, horrible as that must seem to you, an outsider, and shameful as I find it to make confession. It is the case—we doubt one another, we doubt all the world."

CHAPTER V.

THO much yet remained for the newcomer to learn, Mr. Pettyberg had ceased speaking as if all were told. When he did rouse himself from dark meditation it was to say, "We always have late suppers. At a quarter after eight you will meet my family at the table, and become somewhat acquainted with your surroundings."

"Kellogg" felt a quick thrill at the mere fancy of sitting down to table with those he had braved such terrible danger to meet once more. But his voice was quite calm as he spoke, assuming what he regarded as the convincing detached manner of an experienced detective:

"To sum up your various visitations: Two years ago, three hundred and fifty dollars were missed from your secret drawer; eighteen months ago, your daughter's wardrobe, your son-in-law's violin, your watch and your cousin's trunk vanished; that was all on that second occasion?"

"All! Wasn't that sufficient? But no, it was not all; the money was also stolen out of my pockets, and besides that, the savings of years that our cook had hidden away in her attic-room."

"Kellogg" bowed and resumed: "The third visitation, three months ago, resulted in the loss of your daughter's upright piano. And on the last visit, about a week ago, the cook was found in the hall severely stabbed. That was all on that occasion? Nothing was taken?"

"Something undoubtedly would have been taken if my son-in-law hadn't run down at the sound of the cook's cries, and the trampling of feet. The thief and would-be murderer got away, and in such a hurry that for once he left a door open to show how he got out. But what good does that do us? He got away. He left no clew—not even the knife with which he dealt his dastardly blow. And he may come any time again—he may murder my daughter—myself—he may steal the very roof from over our heads."

And he glared at the other in impotent rage, twirling his eyeglasses violently by their slender gold chain.

"Mr. Pettyberg, you said something a while back that I did not understand, but as your detective, it is essential that I understand all the bearings of the case. In what way did you mean the statement that you had finished by doubting one another."

"You touch upon the sorest spot in the mystery," responded the master of the house. "I speak to you now as my confidential detective, as one might repose confidence in a trustworthy lawyer, or a long-tried family physician. As you say, you must know it; but you will not betray us to others."

"Certainly not. You will find me a man of honor." And he gave an odd little smile that he should make this assurance to the man who had brought suit against him and had him convicted as a common thief.

"I am sure of it. Chief Doane would not have sent me a man other than a man of honor. Very well, you shall hear the pitiful truth. My daughter and my son-in-law no longer live together as man and wife."

"Kellogg" caught his breath sharply, his keen gaze unwavering.

"There [illegible] been no divorce, no formal separat[illegible] simply occupy different quarters in my house. My son-in-law is a farmer, and manages a very large estate of which I am half owner. He drives or rides out to the farms—there are three—in the early morning, and returns late in the evening. That is why our suppers are after eight o'clock. His noon meal he takes with one of the tenants' families. Our interests are so closely bound together that it is necessary for him to keep in close touch with myself. I can't leave the bank—I am the president of the Windfair National Bank—to do much good in looking after our farming interests. My daughter appreciates this fact, and does not insist on driving her husband from the house; she is willing for him to stay here so long as he conducts himself toward her as toward a mere acquaintance, and to this he has agreed. They speak when they meet at table, they may address a few words to each other of common politeness—that is all. Of course, it is a dreadful blow to me that things should have come to this pass. I cannot think my daughter's future in any way assured, and I respect and love my son-in-law. But it can't be helped, I suppose. Not unless you solve this terrible mystery."

"You think the solution would bring them together?"

"Of course. It is on account of my daughter's horrid suspicions of her husband that the breach has been made."

"Does she suspect him of being the thief?"

"She suspects him of knowing more about it than he will confess. Of course, she knows that Roger Woolcraft is no thief; but she thinks he has acted like a villain in a certain matter of the past, and she says she can never forgive it. He admits nothing."

"Kellogg" opened his mouth to speak, but his voice failed him. That reference to "a certain matter of the past" had driven the breath from his body.

Mr. Pettyberg continued: "And my son-in-law, Roger Woolcraft, suspects that my cousin is hiding something. I believe he thinks she is in some way in league with the robber, and has admitted him into the house and let him out on various nights. But I don't know what he suspects; I only know he distrusts her. It is palpably absurd, the only instance in which I have found my son-in-law a veritable fool. But you can't argue him out of his crazy prejudice, and all I can do is to defend my cousin and continue to beg her to share my hospitality. She is a single lady, sir, and what you might call a poor relation. She has none other to whom she may look; her mother was kind to me when I needed kindness and, by Heaven! she shall be the last soul to be expelled from my house. For this is my house. I may be an old man, and I may look older than I am, but I'm not outdoors yet, not by any means!"

"Has the lady any opinion in regard to the criminal?"

"The lady? My cousin? Oh, yes, in her way she is as unreasonable as my son-in-law in his. She—Miss Edge—my cousin's name is Miss Jetty Edge—is firmly convinced that the cook is at the bottom of everything. The cook, as I've told you, is an old family servant. Why, she has lived with us since my daughter's birth—thirty-eight years ago. Think of that. And nobody is more faithful to all our interests. She loves us all—except, naturally, my cousin. There's nothing she wouldn't do for me, or for my daughter, or even for my son-in-law."

"Then how can your cousin suspect her?"

"As to that, you might ask how can my son-in-law suspect my cousin. But my cousin is full of arguments, and she is unscrupulous in arguing the point. She says the cook is the only one who could admit strangers in the dead of night, and is the only one who could so accurately point out to looters where different valuables are. She talks a great deal about a worthless son of the cook, a child of an unhappy marriage, now past middle age—that is, if he be still alive. Upon my honor, sir, we've neither seen that ne'er-do-well, nor heard of him, since he went off to China before my daughter was born. But my cousin—Miss Edge—vows that he must be the robber, and that his mother is in league with him!"

"What does your son-in-law think about her theory?"

"He thinks she's trumped it up in order to keep him from suspecting her. And upon my word, it's absurd enough to make him think so! But of course she's sincere. But she's illogical because she's a woman—that's all that's the matter with her."

"Whom does the cook claim to suspect?"

"Cook very frankly admits that she doesn't know what to think or which way to turn. Perhaps she's the only sensible one amongst us. Why, if you'll believe me, my cousin actually imagines that the cook stabbed herself to make us think somebody was in the house! While I think my daughter more than half believes that it was my son-in-law who, pretending to rescue the cook, was really the man who assaulted her—for you'll remember the cook didn't see the face of the assailant! Oh, it's a terrible tangle. I tell you, I'll be driven mad if you don't straighten it out!"

"It distresses you," murmured "Kellogg," enjoying, in a way, the other's semi-hysterical mood.

"Distresses me!" burst out Mr. Pettyberg. "Why—why——"

"Yes, yes," the other interrupted soothingly. "Just one more point, and I'll not trouble you to discuss the case further. You haven't told me whether or not you entertain suspicions of the thief."

"I do, most certain suspicions, adamantine suspicions, axiomatic suspicions. In a word, I may say that I KNOW who is at the bottom of it all. But I can prove nothing. Nor can I induce any of my family to share my views."

"Kellogg" knew as well what was coming as if he were in the older man's mind. His face became grim and ironset, but he did not speak.

"Twenty years ago I was robbed by a young fellow named Emory Barstow. We sent him to the penitentiary for a term of years quite satisfactory to all concerned, but the rascal escaped after four years of hard labor, and for sixteen years has not been heard of. Sir, that wretch took from the secret drawer the sum of five thousand dollars which he had seen me place there—for I trusted him in those days as I trusted myself. I heard somebody here in the library in the night, and crept down to make sure I had heard rightly. He sprang upon me, dealt me a murderous blow on the head, left me for dead, took the money, and not only that, sir, not only that. He had the boldness, the effrontery to go up to my guest-room—at that time my future son-in-law was my guest—and rob him of his suit of clothes. My son-in-law saw him quite plainly—it was Emory Barstow. Also, before he beat me to the floor, I caught a full glimpse of his face—it was Emory Barstow, not a doubt of it. There were other reasons for proving it, even had we both been blind. Nor has any one doubted it, so far as I know. But that is a mere detail." He paused to compose himself.

"So he escaped, did he?" inquired "Kellogg."

Mr. Pettyberg retorted: "Do you suppose a cyclone like that could be kept shut up for long? Of course he escaped."

"Kellogg" suggested with restraint, "Possibly the fellow thought four years in the mines rather long."

"I dare say. And how do you happen to know that he worked in the mines?"

"Isn't that the usual thing?"

"Why, that's as it may be. However, you've guessed right—in the mines he burrowed—until he got out. And in my opinion it's he and his gang who have harassed me since."

"Oh! Then he had a gang?"

"Could he have carried off my piano of himself?"

"I suppose not. And no doubt, knowing how you'd take it, he might consider this thieving a very good revenge, eh?"

"Of course he would; and consider this—he knew the secret of the hidden drawer. It was he who brought me the five thousand dollars that night, twenty years ago. He saw me put it away, he watched while I touched the secret spring."

"After that experience, why did you ever trust the drawer again?"

"Well—the drawer was so very convenient; and eighteen years had passed without another robbery. How was I to imagine that, after eighteen years, Emory Barstow would turn up? As soon as he was safely clapped in jail I went back to the use of my drawer, and used it constantly all the time up to the theft of my three hundred and fifty dollars. Of course, since then it has not served me."

"Then I advise you to resume the use of it," said "Kellogg," thoughtfully. "Perhaps I can so manage it as to catch the real criminal in that way. I will explain later—but now, I should like a few minutes alone in my room before I meet your family at supper."

CHAPTER VI.

HE FOUND that the front room over the library had been assigned to his use, and as he sat by the window gazing at the road as if he could never see it enough, he prepared himself for the meeting downstairs.

The first danger was over—the long conversation with his employer had not resulted in aroused suspicions. Could he hope to succeed as well when, at the evening meal, four pairs of eyes that had known him intimately would be focused upon him? Yes—if he bore himself as calmly, as collectedly as he had when with Mr. Pettyberg.

While waiting to be summoned, he strove desperately for this self-mastery. At the same time, he was wondering whether or not he should write to Mrs. Kellogg. If he remained silent, was there danger of her trying to find him—thus exposing the fact that he was a disguised convict? But if he wrote—imitating the handwriting of the suicide—might not the very fact of his writing arouse her doubts?

From the letter he had learned that Mrs. Kellogg was an unfaithful wife, therefore could have no wish to hear from her husband. Still, such might be the husband's character that not to hear would prompt her to inquiries. At the detective agency she would be told that he had gone to Windfair, and if a description of him reached her she would merely suppose him professionally disguised. But would it not be better to prevent her from making inquiries?

Suppose he sent her that sinister death message exactly as it had been written—mailing it on the car? She would not understand the latter part, about the coat which was to make the world suppose the writer had committed suicide, but she would doubtless conclude that, having written the letter, circumstances had prevented him from carrying out that part of his plan. But the corpse might be recovered from the river. What then?

He had an instinctive feeling that whatever he decided in regard to this matter would be of the utmost consequences. He hardly expected to remain longer than two weeks in Windfair—perhaps not longer than that could he retain the confidence of his employers here, and of the agency in St. Louis. Surely an unfaithful wife who had parted from her husband after a scene of discovery would not complain if her husband maintained silence during two weeks.

He reached the conclusion that if he found it wisest to write to Mrs. Kellogg he would simply copy the first half of the dead man's letter, omitting any allusion to self-destruction, but that unless some new development arose to make it necessary, he would neither write nor forward the letter he had found pinned to the detective's coat.

He was summoned to the evening meal by a maid, pretty, neatly dressed, and of about 17. He wondered if he had known her parents, which was the case unless they had moved to Windfair within the past twenty years. He felt a keen desire to ask, but restrained himself. What did it matter? Nevertheless it did matter—every detail of Windfair, no matter how trivial, he found inexpressibly near to his heart. Until now he had not realized how horribly homesick he had been for his birthplace. In the hall below, once as intimately familiar to him as his bachelor lodgings in the village hotel, he was so overwhelmed by countless memories that nothing stood forth with distinctness—he was bewildered, dazed, unable to think.

In the dining-room, all were in their places waiting for him—the old familiar dining-room with the same pictures on the wall, in which a birthday dinner had been given in his honor but a few months before his arrest. What an irony of life! The same four sat at the table, now as strangers, who then had greeted him as intimate friends.

"No ceremony," said Mr. Pettyberg, nodding toward the vacant place. "My son-in-law is always in a hurry, and can't wait for forms." Then turning to his son-in-law who sat on his right: "Roger, this is the famous Harold Kellogg." And to the newcomer: "Mr. Kellogg, this is my son-in-law, Mr. Woolcraft. The lady at his side is our cousin, Miss Edge. This lady at the head of the table is my daughter, Mrs. Woolcraft; you will take your seat without ceremony, for you are to be one of us."

He sat down without looking at anybody directly, feeling that the first moment was the most critical. When they were accustomed to his hairy face, his neat but plain and unmatched clothes, his awkwardness, any impression that might be produced of a bygone time would be obliterated. He could feel their eyes intent upon him, and his skin burned. He was blindingly conscious of all sorts of grotesque and impossible fancies, and his lack of ease no doubt increased the general restraint.

He wondered if he possessed little tricks of manner that might betray him, and he studiously moved and ate contrary to his natural impulses. The result was something labored, artificial. All appetite was gone—how could it be otherwise under the circumstances? But he ate heartily, not knowing what he was putting in his mouth. His embarrassment presently set the others at their ease so far as he was concerned. Here, they imagined, sat a real detective, unused to the "best society" and consequently diffident. But they were never at ease in regard to one another, so the meal was a silent one.

He kept asking himself if he were dreaming. Could it be true that the woman who, as a beautiful, vivacious, impulsive girl, had promised to be his wife, sat near at hand, ready to look at him, to speak to him, to serve him? It was like a miracle, for it was true. When he dared, he took covert impressions of her face and figure.

She was now thirty-eight, but to his love-hungered soul she had never seemed more desirable. The vivacity of youth was gone, sorrow had subdued the piquancy of her eyes, but there was a noble serenity, a beautiful grace and sympathy worth far more to his sobered and chastened taste. He wondered if any of that restrained dignity, that veiled suffering, had been inspired by his misfortunes, and if he were in any way the cause, or an element in the cause, of difference between her and her husband. That he would learn fully before his two weeks were gone.

Near the conclusion of the meal, Mr. Pettyberg broke a dead silence:

"Have you any plan in mind, Mr. Kellogg? Now that you are on the ground, we hope not a moment will be lost in your investigations. The people at this table," he added, with sudden bitterness, "may disagree upon everything else under heaven, but all agree in wanting the mystery cleared away."

He was disturbed, baffled, at being called upon in this way, and found it difficult to divert his mind from Mrs. Woolcraft. At that table, she was the only one of whom he had thought, the only one who mattered, the one who had brought him back to face the dangers of a discovery more to be dreaded than death. His eyes turned to the old gentleman filled with bewilderment. But at the same time he was painfully conscious of the need of meeting the situation.

"Yes, I have a plan," he mumbled.

They heard his artificial voice, saw his uneasy manner and found it perfectly in keeping with their ideas of a real detective at a gentleman's table. The more he tried to seem at ease and the more they saw he was not, the less likelihood was there of his self-betrayal.

"Well?" asked Mr. Pettyberg, impatiently, after a dead silence.

"Yes, a plan," muttered "Kellogg." Then he roused himself almost fiercely. He threw up his head, but looked at no one but his employer. He went on with painstaking slowness:

"It will be necessary, or at any rate wisest, for me to see each person of the household alone for a few minutes. I should like to talk over the mystery quietly and dispassionately with each one while the others are out of hearing. My object is as follows: It often happens that a detective can obtain facts, facts which those who know them do not suspect have a direct bearing on the mysterious event. When these various interviews have been held, I shall know all that you know collectively. Whereas, if we held a general discussion, one or more would naturally be silenced by the presence of others, or by the utterance of some opinion that would make his or her opinion seem worthless."

"We have no objection, certainly, to your plan," returned Mr. Pettyberg, "and if you like you may hold these interviews in the library."

"Kellogg" nodded assent. All had heard him speak at length, and he was still secure.

Roger Woolcraft spoke up brusquely: "May I ask to be selected for the first seance? I've been hard at work all day, and am so sleepy I can hardly keep my eyes open when supper is ended." He continued in a pleasant voice, "I'm a farmer, and get up before the sun."

"Kellogg" looked his former rival full in the face, and held him with his eyes, as he slowly answered, "Yes, you shall come first."

Woolcraft nodded carelessly and turned away, finding nothing in the "detective's" eyes of a startling nature.

"I have already discussed the case with you." "Kellogg" looked at Mr.

(Continued on Page 11.)

COLONEL WADE'S DAUGHTER

-:- Or, -:-

The Stolen Birthright

By Marquis James

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CHAPTER IX.

PIERRE RIGOLET'S famous gambling house did not look the part on the outside. One seeing it for the first time easily might mistake it for the ancient residence of an old Creole family, that had held fast against the changing conditions of the neighborhood and refused to move uptown. One could reasonably be pardoned for the mistake, since there are many such examples in New Orleans. In unkempt vicinities where gentility has all but relinquished the unequal struggle against the resistless encroachment of small shops and lodging houses, one may see an austere old manse, still clinging to the brink of the social abyss, brooding in the lengthening shadows of glories that waxed and waned in another day.

Rigolet's, indeed, had been such a place before the gambler had purchased the house on the death of the last of the direct family which had built it back in the forties. It was a great, solid four-square affair of smooth reddish stone. It did not look old—in the sense of betraying dilapidation or abandonment—and it did not look new; it looked mature, established and quietly majestic. It exuded a dignified air of seniority.

To tell the truth, there was not much about the house to grow old and fall in disrepair; no frills or fancywork—unless one would regard as such the severely grilled ironwork about the generous gallery which extended the length of the front and also about the miniature galleries which jetted from below each second-story window. The only sign of years one could swear to was the greenish mold which had attached itself to the stones next to the ground, creeping up an inch or so a year until it reached almost to the first floor window-sills.

It was a somber old chateau, retired well back from the public banquette, exclusive and aloof like a haughty grand duchess, behind the pale of the high iron fence which marked the boundaries of the spacious grounds. Blinds painted green, always scrupulously closed, covered the windows. These were all that varied the monotony of the reddish stone expanse.

The scenes which gave life to Iberville street in front of Rigolet's differed greatly, according to whether it was night time or day. During the accepted waking hours the narrow little thorofare was noisy with the racket of two-wheeled carts and peddlers' wagons clattering over the rutty stones. Jabbering, corsetless housewives jostled to and fro on the walks, on their daily pilgrimages to the French Market. If they had no need to buy they went to gossip. The markets are the open forums of New Orleans.

At night, when workaday folk were abed, or should have been, big silent automobiles slid into Iberville street and drew up in impressive rows before the famed gambling house. Men in faultless evening attire would step from the tonneaux, walk thru the great gate and up the broad approach to the house.

At the door a stooped, white-wooled, old negro who looked for the world as tho he had stepped right out of an ante-bellum story book, would greet them, and after a few expert questions turn each newcomer over to a colored houseman. The visitor would be escorted to the particular room he sought—all according to the manner in which he elected to tempt chance that night.

Different rooms were set aside for different modes of play—roulette, faro, poker, whist and so on. There also were rooms for social purposes—clubrooms, a library and a buffet. Pierre Rigolet's was an aristocratic clientele. Most of those who came there to play were accustomed to luxury in their homes. They found it, too, at Rigolet's, where tens of thousands were wagered, won and lost each night, the "house" receiving its stated tithe.

"Ah, good evening, Mr. Thibidoux!" bowed the venerable negro at the door, receiving Henri's hat and stick. "Back in the city again."

Henri gave no answer to this greeting. The old negro knew him well enough not to expect any.

"Friends waiting for you, suh," continued he. "Up in the usual room."

Thibidoux followed one of the silent-footed attendants up the stairs. He knew the way to the certain poker room he always frequented well enough to find it in the dark, but this bit of formality of having each visitor conducted and announced was an inviolable rule at Rigolet's. It preserved an air of distinction.

"Mr. Henri Thibidoux," proclaimed the attendant, pausing tentatively in the half-opened doorway of the small room.

Henri brushed past him and drew up a chair to the circular table, about which five men engaged at cards were grouped. He bowed greeting to the company. Four of the men at the table were known to him. Burford, one of the players, speedily vouched for the stranger—a Mr. Parker, recently returned from South America.

Thibidoux seated himself and called for a thousand dollars' worth of chips, tossing a bill of that denomination on the table in front of the banker.

"You come well prepared, I see," commented Burford, glancing at the thick cylinder of bills from which Henri had peeled the thousand dollar note.

"Prepared to win or lose with equal grace," answered Thibidoux, easily. "A singular stroke of good fortune has been mine since I sat here last."

"And that is——" invited Burford, fingering the cards.

"I have just inherited an estate of considerable size," responded Thibidoux, carelessly, raising the bid of the man on his right one hundred dollars. "Yes, I am quite a man of affairs, now; so much so, in fact, that I will be absent from New Orleans most of the time. I am a planter with many acres on my hands."

Burford laughed immoderately.

"Man of affairs! Planter with many acres on his hands!" he chortled. "Say, that's rich!"

"My dear Burford," rebuked Thibidoux, sharply, "your humor is in bad taste, as you shall see when you hear my story. But first, and for the benefit of the other gentlemen, let me say what I was about to say when interrupted: I am the new master of Wade Hall, which, for your information, is a fine old place near Acadia, in Rapides parish," he concluded, exhibiting an ace full on call and gathering in the pot.

"Some people," observed Burford, grimly, "have all the luck." Burford was speaking of the two hundred he had lost on a straight, but Henri took it for another ironical assault on his story.

"In the estimation of some," he replied, "the diligent always are lucky. For ten years, ever since my sister married him, I have advised old Colonel Wade with his business affairs, and for the past year, since his health has been so bad, I have been virtually responsible for the entire conduct of his business, which is quite extensive, assuming the burden at the earnest behest of my sister. Now the old gentleman has but a few weeks to live, and realizing his end is near has dictated the disposition of his estate. The execution of his will devolves upon me. My sister gets the home place, where shortly I will go to live and take active charge. A cash settlement is made on a daughter of the Colonel's by a previous marriage. The girl desired it, as she wishes to be free. I might mention that rumor of a college romance of the less conventional type reaching her home community helped to influence her decision in this regard, but any one who knows Henri Thibidoux knows that, whatever his other indiscretions, never has he uttered a syllable that could be construed to reflect adversely upon the name of a lady! At any rate, the girl sailed tonight for Paris, where ostensibly she goes to study art. I was down to see her aboard. That explains my tardiness."

"I have never heard you speak of these activities before," remarked Burford, doggedly.

"I am not one to count my chickens, much less to prate about them, before they have pipped the shells," rejoined Thibidoux. "But now that all is settled and arranged, and that the girl, who, to say the least, never gave me credit for sincere intentions, is gone, I feel free to speak. Besides, some explanation regarding my altered circumstances is due my friends."

The skeptical Burford had no more to say. Thibidoux's remarks were accepted at par. Henri, thoroly satisfied with the manner he had carried things off, dismissed the subject from his mind. The air became rifty with tobacco smoke. The conversation around the table grew monosyllabic, as befits a poker game.

The player who had least to say of all was Mr. Parker. He was busy taking note of many things, however, an activity he carried on secretly. His companions regarded him only as a quiet and exceedingly clever poker player—which is not an unusual combination. They had no need to inquire further, for had he not been introduced into the company by Pierre Rigolet himself?

For hours and hours they shuffled, dealt and played. The bareheaded negro oyster shuckers, shuffling along to their work on the luggers in the Old Basin, were passing in Bienville street outside when the sitting broke up. Poker is not a game of cards; it is a game of men. Parker showed the heaviest winnings of the six. Thibidoux, notwithstanding poor luck, came out nearly even.

Parker made his excuses, and, descending the broad, thickly carpeted stairs, asked to be shown to the private office of Pierre Rigolet. An attendant guided him to a small room on the first floor, and, after due formalities, ushered him into the presence of the gambling-house proprietor.

Rigolet, a squat little man of middle years, sleek and fat and of a pallorish complexion that comes of over-easy living, was checking up his profits of the night. As Parker entered he turned from his littered desk, beside which stood a small iron safe, the repository of a good round fortune. Rigolet greeted Parker with the professional smile of cordiality he reserved for such occasions.

"I called to thank you for the courtesies extended me tonight," said the visitor.

"It is needless," assured Rigolet. "Anything at all to assist an officer of the law in performance of his duty. I obey the law myself, and conduct a gentlemanly, law-abiding place. When characters under suspicion frequent this house you confer a favor by notifying me at once."

"Thanks. That is the spirit we appreciate," responded the bogus Parker, in reality Richards of Crown's office.

"But tell me," urged Rigolet, "did you learn anything—ah, of interest concerning this Thibidoux?"

"Oh, I got on fairly well," replied the detective, evasively, yet pleasantly enough. "Good night, Mr. Rigolet."

"Stay! May we not have a bottle of wine together?" invited the gambler.

"Thanks again," said Richards, "but I must hasten."

"Any time I can help you! Any time!" beamed the rotund Rigolet, polishing his hands with a fat man's enthusiasm. "Feel at liberty to command me always, Mr. Richards."

The detective received his hat and walked out on the gallery, apparently immersed in the splendors of the sunrise. He was awaiting the appearance of Thibidoux, whom he intended to follow.

Henri, meanwhile, had entered the private room of Pierre Rigolet in response to summons.

"Did you take note of a fellow named Parker who played at your table tonight?" solicited the gambler, narrowly.

"Just casually—why do you ask?" inquired Thibidoux.

"Because he is a Government detective," confided Rigolet, with the dark air of one imparting great intelligence, "and he is on your trail. I don't know what his quest is, and mind you, I am not inquiring into your personal affairs. But as a friend I just thought I would speak to you about it. When gentlemen are in my house they are my guests, and shall have my protection. This man doubtless plans to follow you from here. Therefore, may I suggest——"

"Pierre, you are very considerate," interrupted Thibidoux, "but needlessly alarmed. A detective? Well! Well!" He laughed heartily.

"It is nothing, I assure you," he chuckled. "Just a little jest of a friend of mine."

But Rigolet knew it was no jest. The gambler was confounded at this display of savoir faire, all of which was proof merely that Thibidoux knew his part and played it well.

A few minutes later Henri stepped into a taxicab at the curb, and with a word to the driver was whirled off uptown. Closely following in a second machine was Richards. Thibidoux was driven to one of the big hotels, where he registered and took a room, leaving a call for noon.

Richards engaged a room on the same floor and left a call for eleven o'clock, which he figured would give him plenty of time to be up and doing before Thibidoux left his bed.

CHAPTER X.

THREE days later Camden Sturgis sat in the smoker of a north-bound local train, chewing reflectively on the end of an unlighted cigar. He was in an embittered state of mind. Embittered at what or whom, he would have been embarrassed to specify. But to save his face, he probably would have blamed the train, should any one have inquired the cause of his perturbation.

The detective fancied his mission one of life and death, all of which affected the behavior of the train not at all. It puffed leisurely along, and there was no station too humble, no hamlet too small, not to be favored with a generous, hospitable stop. Sturgis by no means was being borne to his destination on the wings of the wind or with speed commensurate with the exigencies of his journey.

It was, however, he observed philosophically, the very best he could do. He had left New Orleans by the first train after his release from the hospital. His recovery from the effects of the anaesthetic encountered in the office of Doctor Binot had been slower than anticipated. Despite entreaties, the hospital physician was adamant, and would not hear to his leaving until entirely recovered. This required three days. The local, slow as it was, would beat the limited train to Acadia by two hours, since it left New Orleans several hours earlier.

As the little train visited along at its exasperating pace, Sturgis turned over and over in his mind the circumstances of the Wade case. He had ceased to regard his Great Adventure as such, merely. He was deadly in earnest.

Matters had not been advanced much since he was picked up unconscious in the office of Doctor Binot, in the Monteleone Hotel.

Thibidoux had eluded Richards with ease that was disconcerting, after that detective had shadowed him from Rigolet's. Forewarned by the gambling-house keeper that he was to be followed, the call for noon was left only as a ruse. Going to his room, Henri merely waited until Richards had repaired to his own quarters. He then slipped unobtrusively out of the hotel and vanished. Not so much as a trace of him had been regained.

The men assigned to locate Doctor Binot had been no more successful. The whereabouts of Colonel Wade and Patrice were mysteries number three and four.

The powers of darkness were in high triumph. The whole case, as Sturgis conned it over, narrated like the transcript of a Greek tragedy. Colonel Wade was sketched as he once had been, a vigorous, cultured man of wealth and family, a member of the select society of the plantations and of exclusive clubs in New Orleans; a lover of music and art, a dilettante in literature, his comm[illegible] home at Wade Hall a perpetual open house and a veritable salon frequented by the most gifted and gracious people of the South. Then Sturgis depicted the planter as he was now, a melancholy wreck of his former self, his daughter, his fortune and his fair home in the hands of his enemies; his fine health shattered, his excellent mind in ruins, and the final shadows apparently closing about him off in some clandestine retreat where the conspirators exiled him, there to await the grim achievement of their machinations.

And then, there appeared the evil triumvirate: Henri Thibidoux, a sinister Mephistophelian figure, hovering first in background shadows, suave, cynical, dominant—an impresario of wicked deeds, busy with the invention and direction of the conspiracy. Now, with his fingers on the prize, he had emerged, and proclaiming himself the new master of Wade Hall, made ready for the denouement. His method savored of hypnotism, so consummately cunning, so infallible.

The part played by Eloise, dictated and supervised by her brother, was one calculated to extend the skill of a versatile actress, a great tragedienne. Entering the home of Colonel Wade as a sort of glorified governess and companion, almost at once had she glimpsed the possibilities which lay within her horizon. The rewards, too great to be lost thru blunders, caused her to enlist the aid of her brother.

From that time on the entire program of her life and conduct at Wade Hall was ordered along the lines of a definite plan, which Henri worked out in the most exacting detail. She was Trilby, he Svengali. Her carefully studied attitude of harshness toward Patrice, while at the same time she courted and cultivated the girl's father in all the winning little ways a woman knows, comprised a delicate role indeed, but never once did the artful Eloise lose control of the situation. She estranged the child and won the father.

The marriage, the banishment of Patrice and the subsequent campaign of nagging and petty annoyance designed to break the proud Colonel's health and spirit all were results of painstaking and rehearsed design.

At the proper moment Manager Henri had introduced Binot, a necessary character to the development of the plot. Binot's place was a difficult one to fill, but in the dark-eyed little French doctor Thibidoux was certain he had found his man.

Binot truly was an evil genius. His mind stripped of its Satanic proclivities and directing its possessor's energies into different channels might have made Binot a great physician and placed him upon a pedestal of permanence in the world of science. As it was, Doctor Binot's work in the last yellow fever epidemic which swept New Orleans—labor expended merely as a cloak to cover less altruistic deeds—had won him wide renown. Binot's career had taken him around the world and out of the beaten paths, into strange, far lands sought only by adventurous men who go there not thru choice, often, but for reasons sufficient, nevertheless.

There was something unfathomable about the man, an air that whiffed of hidden secrets and intrigue, which the brilliant, polished exterior of the little doctor did not quite expel. He struck the observer as a man with a "past," as one says for lack of a readier term, and his demeanor, however affable, rebuffed familiarity.

Binot's task in furtherance of the project of Henri Thibidoux was in excellent keeping with his inclinations and abilities. Binot was to supervise the last scene of the drama—the death of Colonel Wade. His part was brief, but indispensable. His certificate as a physician would enable him to satisfy certain legally demanded requirements incident to the death, and thus forefend possibility of untoward post-mortem developments.

How admirably the trio worked toward their ends! Never a mistake or an infelicitous move. Every contingency provided for. Sturgis was unable to refrain from respecting the craft and resource of the man behind it all. It was a criminal masterpiece.

And against these harmonized agencies of unrighteousness was what? A young girl, whose measure had been taken before she was old enough to be conscious of what went on about her. Her first stroke in defense of her father had thrown her completely in the power of her foes. Of course, thanks to the episode on the train, other forces now were bestirred in the girl's behalf, yet they seemed to get nowhere. Was it too late to circumvent the schemes of Henri Thibidoux?

Where was Colonel Wade? Where was the girl? These baffling questions protruded themselves again and again into the secret agent's calculations. Theory after theory he spun as the slow train loafed along. A dozen tricky possibilities but no definite plan resulted. He was bound on a reconnoitering expedition to Wade Hall, but it was a roving and uncertain commission.

Sturgis was shaken from his gloomy reverie as the train rattled to a stop and the porter announced Acadia. He alighted and surveyed the contented scene about the village depot. The station loungers whose rest shortly before had been disturbed by the arrival and departure of the thru train from the North took slight cognizance of the coming and going of the more friendly local. The town hackman solicited Sturgis' patronage wearily.

"Cab, sir?" he queried in bored fashion.

"How far is it to Wade Hall?" asked Sturgis.

"'Bout two miles, I reckon," responded the driver, scratching his head as if to dislodge an idea. "Straight down the east road. Most too far for me to drive you out, seeing I'm not s'posed make trips out of town."

"Then you may take me to your principal hotel." Sturgis was conscious of the civic flattery.

"'Taint hardly wuth driving one over, sir," drawled the tired voice of the hackman. "It's just 'cross the way there." He indicated the white clapboard and green-shuttered building behind the oak trees, which housed the City Hotel.

Nearer smiling than he had been all day, Sturgis picked up his grip and made his way across the common to the hotel. Registering and satisfying the innkeeper's curiosity as to his presence in Acadia, Sturgis took to his room. A washbowl of cool water removed the stains of travel from his face and hands. Refreshed by these ablutions, he dropped into a chair. His confidence returned.

"I'll beat them yet," he mused, determinedly.

His eye fell upon a copy of the Clarion, the village's weekly newspaper, which had been left in the room. Sturgis picked it up, and from force of habit began to scan headlines on the front page. This item attracted his attention:

"ACADIA GIRL DEPARTS TO STUDY ART IN PARIS.

"As we go to press we are informed that Miss Patrice Wade, one of the fairest daughters of Rapides parish, has gone to Europe to study art. We have this news from Mrs. Wade, of Wade Hall, who asserts that during her last year at college in New Orleans Miss Patrice has developed surprising artistic ability.

"The announcement of Miss Wade's departure, not only from our midst, but from the United States, comes as a distinct surprise. But Acadia's loss is Paris' gain, and those who had hoped that upon her graduation Miss Wade would return and reopen Wade Hall to the functions of former years, should be proud that the fame of a young lady from Rapides parish has passed even beyond the watery reaches of the ocean.

"Patrice—as ye editor has known her since she was a babe in arms—takes with her the Godspeed and blessing of each one of her friends, who number the entire white population of Rapides parish.

"Colonel Wade, our esteemed townsman, we regret to state, still is ill in New Orleans. His condition has shown no encouraging progress for better, despite the fact a galaxy of the most eminent physicians of the Crescent City have been called to his aid."

Sturgis read the item again and again. It was a most interesting piece of news. The detective saw in it another of Thibidoux's cunning tricks. The article in the paper was a subterfuge to explain to the good people of Rapides parish the unexpected disappearance of Patrice; it supplied excuse and plausibility for her elimination.

Sturgis found the whole town discussing the matter. That Patrice should leave the United States while her father was at death's door seemed utterly beyond comprehension; yet to the simple minds of the Acadians the printed page carried a wonderful conviction. It was in the paper, therefore it must be so.

Only old Major Roundtree, the station agent, ventured the role of skeptic.

"Don't believe it," he contended tenaciously. "There was something more than art on that girl's mind, day she left here last week. Love affair, I said then and I say it now. Might fool some, but can't fool me. No, sir! Can't fool me."

Sturgis gathered the village gossip on the subject, which was no Herculean task. At length there occurred to him a connection between the item in the paper and what Patrice had told him of her stepmother's desire to see her go to Paris after graduation.

The idea crystallized in a flash. A sudden fear seized the detective. What of Patrice now? Was she, in reality, in Paris or on the way there? Had Thibidoux's careless remark at Rigolet's, as reported by Richards, been the truth:

"She took passage tonight for Paris, where she goes to study art. I saw her aboard."

Binot knew Paris. Doubtless he had friends there of an ilk that could see to the concealment of the girl, once she was shanghaied and taken abroad. The mystery grew sizable.

The lateness of the hour made an excursion to Wade Hall impracticable. Sturgis decided to wait until morning and set out early.

Just before retiring he sent a long telegram, in code, to Crown at New Orleans, reciting in detail what he had read in the paper and adding the information he had gained from town talk, which appeared to confirm the story that Patrice was on her way to Paris.

CHAPTER XI.

STURGIS was abroad before six the following morning. The sun was idling along in the eastern sky, not yet really down to the business of the day. A cool breeze from the north, sprung up during the night, made the morning delightful. The grass was damp with dew. Sturgis hired a saddle horse at the village livery stable and set out on the east road, bound for Wade Hall.

Sturgis soon was lost in contemplation of the landscape. From the negro quarters, which stood apart a respectful distance from each "big house," or plantation manor, the singing hands were emerging, ready for their day's toil afield. Buxom negresses, in gaudy cotton dresses and with heads swathed in riotous bandanas, appeared and disappeared in and out of cabin doors, busy with the matutinal task of putting their kitchens to rights after breakfast. All was vastly different from the farm scenes of his boyhood up in Ohio.

Sturgis rode on, following the broad road until he surmised he must be in the vicinity of his destination.

A negro on a riding plow had just turned into a field which adjoined the highway and was running his first furrow. Sturgis reined up his horse.

"My man," he inquired, sharply conscious that this was poor Southern usage for opening a conversation with a colored person, "my man, how far is it to Wade Hall?"

"Dis de Wade place, suh," returned the negro, doffing his hat. "But de big house, I reckon you wants. Hit right down de road yonder, 'mongst de trees. See hit better when you made de top of de little hill dar."

Sturgis glimpsed the rambling red roof, visible thru the branches of the trees just over the summit of a small hill a few hundred yards ahead. The negro had drawn up his team in the shade of a neutral oak, which grew precisely on the fence line.

"Is Miss Patrice Wade at home these days?" queried Sturgis.

"Miss Patricey done gone to Irup of summers ober de ocean dar beyon' N'Awlins. Yais, she done gone 'way, de young mistis has."

"And Colonel Wade, is he at home?"

"Lawdee, no, suh," the negro grinned. "You all must be strangah in dese pahts fo' sho'! Massa de Cunnel ain't been heah goin' on six, seben months now. 'Side he doan eben own de ole place no mo'. No 'deedy, he sole out to Massa Hennery. He massa now. Him and Mis' Eloise, dey run de place."

Nothing gives a negro so much satisfaction as to impart solicited information to white folks. The plowman struck an expectant attitude, waiting the next interrogation.

"Is your master Henry here?" asked Sturgis.

"Dat hahd quextion," replied the negro. "Hit mo' I can answer widout knowin'. Massa Hennery, he come and go, night time, day time, any time. Right hahd to tell fo' sho' where eber he is, suh. Mought go on down to de big house and ast——"

The negro left off speaking abruptly. A look of terror recast his mobile countenance. His eyes widened amazingly. Sturgis glanced down the road instinctively, in the direction of the negro's frightened stare.

A runaway horse, harnessed to a light buggy, had just rounded the peak of the hill. The lines were dragging, and the wild steed plunged on at breakneck speed, every moment threatening to capsize the fragile vehicle.

To the seat clung a woman. Sturgis gasped! Was it Patrice? Was she making her escape? No. The questions answered themselves. Unable to make out anything of the features of the imperiled woman, Sturgis could tell it was not Patrice by her hair, which, undone, trailed straight out from her head. It was black; Patrice's was golden.

"It's Mis' Eloise!" yelled the negro.

He quit his plow and vaulting the fence, raced into the road and set himself to leap and grasp the bridle of the runaway as it plunged past. Sturgis, behaving on impulse, lashed up his own mount and galloped forward to intercept the runaway.

He forgot, for the instant, his errand to Wade Hall. He forgot the Wade case and the black part Eloise Wade was supposed to play in it. Other instincts were dominant now. A woman was in danger. Her protection had first call on the energies of any man, black or white. Sturgis urged his mount forward at a furious pace, then turned at the roadside and slipped his feet from the stirrups. The wild horse, foaming at the bit, was on him.

Sturgis was not an expert horseman, which made his feat the more courageous. Like a streak the runaway shot past. The detective leaped. By the merest chance both of his hands clutched the bridle of the maddened animal. All his weight bore down on the reins. He felt the horse's front hoofs pound against his legs and body. Grimly he clung to the reins. To have let go would have meant death under all four hoofs.

The runaway animal swerved from the road and crashed into the fence, going down in a heap. The buggy whirled around and careened over. Its occupant was thrown clear of the beaten highway to the grassy turf on the other side of the road.

Sturgis was bleeding from a laceration of the cheek. His clothing was soiled and torn. His injuries, however, were entirely superficial. He was on his feet quickly and at the side of Eloise Wade.

"Are you hurt?" he asked anxiously.

The woman had retained her self-control remarkably well.

"Not hurt; just shaken up a bit and terribly frightened, I confess," she replied, with a pale smile. Then, noting the abrasion of her rescuer's cheek, she added with concern: "I best had ask, are you injured?"

"Mere scratch," Sturgis remarked as he knelt solicitously beside her.

The negro came running up. He took charge of the late runaway horse, which had scrambled to its feet quite docile again. The buggy was damaged beyond rehabilitation.

"George," ordered Mrs. Wade, "take Firefly back to the barn and return at once with the surrey."

Sturgis marked the ring of authority in her voice. The negro gathered up the broken harness, and finding himself astride the animal which had caused all the trouble was off on a gallop toward the "big house."

"You must accompany me home," said Mrs. Wade, "and have your wound attended to. With the assurance that you have not been seriously injured I shall try to express my gratitude for your bravery. I am Mrs. Singleton Wade."

"My name is Sturgis, Camden C." The detective lent his arm and assisted her to her feet.

"Now," she said, "aside from nervousness, I doubt if I am any the worse for my experience. Mr. Sturgis, it is a pleasure to welcome you to Wade Hall."

A welcome to Wade Hall! In his eagerness to embrace the unexpected opportunity Sturgis was almost unequal to the conventional protest, which he uttered half-heartedly.

One occurrence only marred the situation. Sturgis reproached himself for mentioning his true name to Mrs. Wade. He had regretted it the moment he gave it, but now, more than ever. It was one of those happenings which seem to forebode trouble. Yet, if the name Camden Sturgis had an ulterior meaning for Eloise Wade she kept that fact unbetrayed by word or look. Sturgis had watched her keenly in this regard.

The words had just slipped out. Sturgis had experienced what other men had learned: that, for some reason not apparent, it was not easy to dissemble in the presence of Eloise Wade. There was something about her that called for the cards on the table and no bluffing. He reflected that his too ready tongue might bring him a deal of trouble before his mission to Rapides parish was concluded.

And in this, events were to prove, the detective's surmises were not far amiss.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this interesting story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

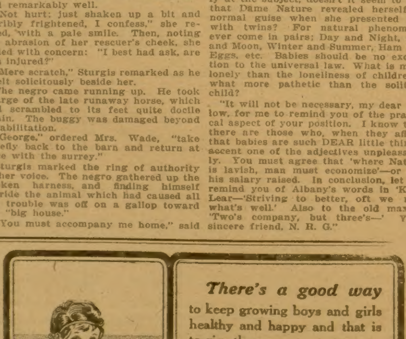
When Fortune Smiled.

A correspondent was informed that an old schoolmate of his had just become the proud father of twins. Correspondent wrote father the congratulatory letter, which is printed herewith:

"Dear Algy—Peace be unto you! Who would have thought of your first issue being a double number? If the type is good and the matter sound, we need have no fear in regard to the circulation. Increase and multiply, and when the present issue is out of print, we can look with confidence for a fresh addition (or is it edition?) whose excellence will not be below par.

"But enough of metaphor. I have tried to imagine what you said and how you looked when the news was broken to you. Did you exclaim, with Miranda, 'Oh, wonder! How many goodly creatures are here?' And looking reflectively at the subject, doesn't it seem to you that Dame Nature revealed herself in normal guise when she presented you with twins? For natural phenomena ever come in pairs; Day and Night, Sun and Moon, Winter and Summer, Ham and Eggs, etc. Babies should be no exception to the universal law. What is more lonely than the loneliness of children—what more pathetic than the solitary child?

"It will not be necessary, my dear fellow, for me to remind you of the practical aspect of your position. I know that there are those who, when they affirm that babies are such DEAR little things, accent one of the adjectives unpleasantly. You must agree that 'where Nature is lavish, man must economize'—or get his salary raised. In conclusion, let me remind you of Albany's words in 'King Lear—'Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.' Also to the old maxim, 'Two's company, but three's—' Your sincere friend, N. R. G."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One of the few sweet foods that does not harm digestion, but builds them strong and bright.

At grocers everywhere.

WANTED—A WIFE.

Wanted—a wife. Come, now, who will apply?
Hers shall be everything riches can buy.
All that I have will I lay at her feet—
If these requirements she's able to meet:

She must be witty and pretty and wise,
Able to counsel and aid and advise;
Strong as Gibraltar in will she must be—
Except in the case where she differs from me.

She must be able to sternly command;
All flesh must quail at the wave of her hand.
To no one on earth must she e'er bow the knee—
Except in the case where she's dealing with me.

Tho her beauty may captivate those she doth meet,
She must husband her charms in a manner discreet,
For her powers and graces no others must see—
She may smile, if she will, but smile only at me.

When the women shall vote, as they may before long,
May her power be great and her influence strong,
But on this I'll insist—she must always agree
With the platforms and principles fostered by me.

Wanted—a wife. What! Does no one apply?
Is there no ready mate for a man such as I?
When I'm offering wealth and life fraught with ease
In return for requirements simple as these?

Wanted—a wife. What is this that you say?
That I've been asleep twenty years to a day?
That no such requirements longer are known
And that woman at last has come into her own?

A wife is no longer a chattel, you say?
Tho she honors and loves, she's not forced to obey?
Woe's me! I'll withdraw my request for a wife
And go back to sleep for the rest of my life.

* * *

MEN ARE SO QUEER.

"Tom was terribly annoyed," said the young woman with the fluffy hair and the hint of a baby stare. "It is perfectly funny the way a man acts just because he is your husband—did you ever notice it?"

"It is, indeed!" said the others in chorus.

"How was I to know that sensible business men would take me so seriously?" pursued the fluffy young woman. "I thought they were supposed to have discernment and sense. At least, Tom is always preaching about their superiority in that respect. Tom explained to me very carefully before we went to the automobile show last month that we couldn't afford it, considering my hat bills and his cigars and the notes coming due on the house we bought last year. I am sure I had it all perfectly clear in my mind, so I am positive I was not to blame.

"But did you ever notice what perfectly fascinating young men they put in charge of the exhibition cars at an automobile show?"

"I should say I have noticed them!" said the brunette girl.

"And, anyhow, Tom had no business to run across two college friends, the minute we got inside the show and pay so much attention to them that he couldn't pay any attention to me! Those three would cluster together over a chassis with a lot of crazy machinery stuck on it and talk like mad. So I simply had to do something to kill time."

"Of course you did!" agreed the others.

"So when at the first booth a good-looking man who saw me studying a touring car asked me if I was interested, I said I was. Then he was just as nice as could be. He told me everything about the car and made me get in it and explained just how I could run it myself and wanted my address to send me a catalog. He said he'd be pleased to come out some day with the car and show me how it ran and give me a lesson. He was so set on coming that I hated to hurt his feelings, so I did not refuse.

"It was just the same way at the next place and ever after. Tom and his friends were so busy over horrid old machinery that I was considerably left out. However, I made lots of friends among the agents.

"All of them wanted to bring out their cars to demonstrate to me how superior they were and, as I had told one man he could come, it didn't seem a bit fair to the others to refuse any of them, so I said I'd be delighted. It had occurred to me that I owed a terrible lot of calls and that it would be such a nice way to get around and pay them.

"I didn't think it necessary to mention the matter to Tom. He did remark that a huge lot of catalogs was coming to our house and it was a wonder where those fellows got people's names and, anyhow, thank goodness, he didn't have a machine eating its head off and making him poor! Men are so selfish.

"The Zero automobile man came out the very day after the show closed and we had a beautiful ride. I made six calls. However, I quite changed my opinion of him, because when I came out of the last place he seemed actually cross and said things about waiting in cold weather. I don't see how he expects to sell cars without showing a little consideration for customers. I told him I didn't think I liked his car at all.

"Then there was the Largo car man and the Allegro man and the Fortissimo man and the Solendiferous man and about six different electric companies, and a lot more whose names I forget When they came one at a time it was lovely.

"I did two teas one afternoon in the Largo car, but the man lost his temper, and when I came from the second tea the wretched creature had driven off and I had to go home on the street car.

"The queer thing was that every one seemed so indignant when I refused to give an order for a car and said things about my leading them on. The worst of it was that Tom came home ill with the grip one afternoon just as seven different cars arrived all at once to take me out! He said he thought I was giving a funeral or a tea.

"When he understood—my dears, have you ever seen a man suffering from bad temper and grip simultaneously?

"I explained to him most carefully that it wasn't my fault at all, but he roared that he was ashamed to look a man in the face from that time on for fear he was one of the automobile agents I had shamefully deceived—yes, that's what he called it—and that he'd like to know what women had in place of consciences, anyhow. What do you think of that? Aren't men utterly queer?"

"They surely are!" the other young married women agreed. "When you hadn't done one single thing, either"

* * *

HER HELPFULNESS.

"Come into the library and let me shut the door," said the Little Woman, firmly. "I've got to tell you something." She closed the door behind them and spoke slowly, distinctly, but as one with pent-up feelings.

"Yes, my husband's sister was lovely—perfectly charming," she said. "Every one has told me so. Every one has told him so, until he's wondering why he never half appreciated Bessie when he was at home with her. I could have told him, but I didn't. I'm only telling you because—well, because if I didn't, I'd probably be arrested for exploding and littering the streets some day.

"Bessie hadn't been here three hours before Mrs. Mudge brought her baby downstairs. She was going to run to the store and wanted to leave it.

"'Oh, leave him with me!" gurgled Bessie, and she really meant it. He is an adorable baby. Mrs. Mudge smiled indulgently, as tho conferring a favor, and tripped down the stairs with a gay little wave of her hand and that was the last of her for a good four hours.

"Of course, I knew Mrs. Mudge, and I'm never so cordial as Bessie was, when she brings him down when I'm busy. Well, Bessie played with him just fifteen minutes and then she planked him down beside me, while she went up to unpack. I called her in an hour to come and get her charge, for I had to bake, but she was bathing and she had just come downstairs all fresh and sweet to see, when Mrs. Mudge came back. She took the baby from me in the kitchen, and I heard her laugh lightly as she gave him to his mother and begged her to bring him in again, she'd enjoyed him so much!

"Then, when I'd invited company for her and had to stay home from the club long enough to get the house cleaned, Bessie offered to go on ahead and carry my sewing bag and explain why I was late. So I told her to run along, for she really wasn't much help when real work had to be done.

"When I got to the club there she was, industriously mending the stockings, which was to be my work for the day, having been horribly neglected. She did look sweet and busy and housewifely, and I could see the ladies smiling and nodding, and I was quite prepared for Mrs. Hughes to draw me aside long enough to tell me I had a wonderful new sister, and wasn't it dear of her to want to help me by mending the family stockings, when she was visiting!

"I leave it to you, could I tell her that it was the first time I knew Bessie could hold a needle and that I should much have preferred that she left me my stockings to darn, while she had stayed home long enough to make her bed and hang up her clothes and write her own acceptance to the Beresons' tea. I just smiled, and when Bessie smilingly refused to let me take the stockings and ordered me to sit down and rest, I had to. It was ten minues before lunch. After lunch Bessie was busy talking and I quietly picked up the stockings and found just one little hole in one of Billy's socks mended.

"But it was hard to smile on when Bessie told Billy at supper that night that he should be ashamed of wearing so many holes in his socks, that she and I had spent all our nice club day mending them! And Billy smiled most gently at her, instead of at me! And when Bessie had gone out for the evening with some young man he told me we ought to do something splendid for her, she'd been such a brick while visiting us, pitching in and helping with the work and all. He said he'd met Mr. Morrison on the street and he stopped him to ask where he'd concealed that sister so long. That it was so unusual for a girl of her complexion and eyes and hair to be so sweet and quiet and domestic that every one was talking about her.

"It seemed some one had given out the fact that she was always doing embroidery. Now from the inside I could tell any one that Bessie very frankly showed me the embroidery and told me her mother had done the first half to coax her to finish it and she used it for pickup work, just to have something in her fingers—but she had not finished one single eyelet since she had been here!

"So Billy brought her a moleskin muff when she was ready to go home and told her it was for the help she had been to me, which he appreciated more than he could say, and Bessie smiled happily and with her hands in his present, behind his neck, she put her cheek against his and whispered audibly that it was a pleasure to help me and she'd enjoyed every bit of work she'd done!"

"Invite her camping next summer," suggested the friend; "then Billy'll understand."

* * *

The Trouble.

Montagu Rollaway had taken the new car out for a trial run.

As new cars always do on trial runs, it broke down and the usual crowd of sympathizers gathered round. While Montagu sprawled himself underneath, questions came thick and fast upon him.

"Broken down, guv'nor?"

"Oh, no. Only playing bears!" replied Monty.

"Is it a good make?"

"The dealer said so."

"What power is it?"

"Forty horse power."

"What's the matter with it?"

"Don't quite know," replied the over-courteous Monty, "but, as far as I can guess, thirty-nine of the horses bolted on the way, and the last one is too upset to answer any more questions!"

* * *

Freedom of Speech.

John Morrison, an elderly Scot laird, had an ancient valet named Gabriel whose petulance and license of speech went so far as to be intolerable. One day at dinner Gabriel took the liberty of calling something which his master said "a great lee." "Weel," said the laird, really offended and rising from the table, "this will do no longer. We must part at last."

"Hout, tout!" replied Gabriel, pressing his master into the chair. "Whaur wad yer honor be better than in yer ain hoose?"

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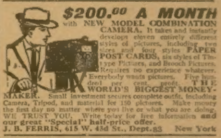

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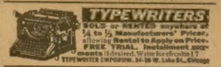

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His Pirate Crew

Or, Law in the Cabin

By Victor Ardmore

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CHAPTER XI.

MATE WILKINSON had secured paper, ink and a pen and was seated at the cabin table to act as recorder. He knew that Salter had sent the passengers to the deck so they could not hear one another testify, but that was so strictly in the line of legal procedure that he gave it but slight attention.

On the other hand, he studied Salter with ever-growing curiosity. Having a natural aptitude for reading men, he had never liked his captain, nor felt absolutely certain that he was really a model sailor in character, but that was not then the point. Analyzing the man at this time, he decided that he had a bent for deep absorption that took the place of what was, in others, enthusiasm. An odd man, he believed, was Captain Salter.

Benny Chain arrived, muscular of limb, broad of shoulder, and strong but good-humored of face, and was duly sworn. He told how he had first met Striker in San Francisco, a man without a ship and nearly penniless, and how he had paid his way until they both found quarters in the Lively Lucy.

"What," asked Salter, "did you really think of him?"

"Well," Benny returned, "he was a nervous critter who was in hard luck, but always square in his dealings."

"Why was he nervous?"

"I s'pose he couldn't help it, sir."

"I know, I know, but it has been suggested that he may possibly have committed some crime and been in dread of the law."

"That never seemed so," Benny declared, after long thought. "I found him [illegible] I never seen signs of past rascality."

"When in San Francisco, did he seem willing to meet strangers, and when on the street did he willingly pass near policemen?"

"Why, yes, I think so," Chain answered, plainly perplexed. "Yes, I think so. I never saw signs of his avoiding anybody, sir. Still, now I think more, there was one odd thing."

"What was it?"

"When in the city he claimed that his eyes were hurt by the street lights, and he liked to walk on darker side streets better than well-lit main ones, yet, after we come to sea, I found he had very keen eyesight."

This was the one item of importance drawn from the sailor, but he was called upon to answer various other questions along the same line. When dismissed he was directed to request Mr. Gladden to come below.

Wilkinson meditated on the evidence while putting down what the Captain dictated, but found nothing to surprise him. In his estimation Striker might have been either incorruptibly honest or a fugitive from justice. The mate had never understood him.

Gladden told nothing of importance. He explained that he had engaged the murdered man at Benny's request, and simply because they both pitied him for a man in hard luck. As for the past night, he had neither heard nor seen anything suspicious.

Next came Pearson and Marx, one after the other, whose testimony was even less important than Gladden's, and both had, according to their testimony, slept without a break. It seemed to Wilkinson that the notary-captain was not advancing rapidly toward results, but Salter appeared to be content.

Having ordered that Jerry, the cook, should come next, he smiled upon the mate without annoyance in his expression.

"When we are done with Pots-and-Kettles I shall take up that row some of our people had with Striker. He drew his knife on them, you will remember."

"Yes."

Wilkinson answered without zeal. Such an inquiry would bring Lake, Axlon and Haggett into the case, and whereas the last two were members of the Captain's original crew, the passenger might be less leniently handled. Knowing how Lake stood with Agatha, he did not like the prospect.

"That little flurry meant no more than a moment's irritation, sir," he added as an afterthought.

"I see that you grasp the situation."

Salter was hardly clear, but Jerry arrived and became the central figure. The man was still nervous, but had rallied somewhat and faced his commander with a measure of composure. His treatment was decidedly different from that of his predecessors in the witness chair, due to his questionable strength of mind.

"Got your dishes all washed up, Jerry?" asked the Captain affably.

"Oh, yes, sir, all done," the cook replied.

"Very fine of you, considering our trouble here. You are what I call a prompt man. Breakfast, too, was excellent, considering."

"I'm glad you think so, sir," said Jerry, beaming with delight.

"Very well cooked, my man. Now," and Salter's voice dripped with smooth-running honey, "tell us just what you heard when you came into the cabin in the night."

"Nothing uncommon, sir. Only just the little swish-swish Miss Eveline made as she went to this table and picked something up."

"Miss Eveline, eh? Sure it wasn't Miss Agatha?"

"Quite sure, sir. The cabin lamp was burning, according to your orders, and I could see distinctly. Her face was plain—yes, and I could tell that she was wearing that blue gown thing she uses on deck when the weather is hot."

"And that which she picked up—was it about so long?"

Salter held his two index fingers six inches apart to illustrate.

"Bless me, no, sir! It was so little I couldn't tell what it was, but I guessed that it was a finger ring."

"You had cleared the table previously?"

"Yes, sir, but that was hours before. No ring was there then."

"Did the object she picked up sparkle in the light?"

"I saw nothing like that, but it was so little I couldn't tell."

"Where did she go after that?"

"I don't know, sir. Finding that she was there I went back to my own quarters."

"Why had you left them and gone to the cabin? Was it that sound you had heard that took you there?"

"I didn't hear a sound before coming. Fact is, sir, I dreamed that pirates had come and filled the cabin with their numbers, and I woke up scared, but when I found the cabin so still and Miss Eveline moving about so natural, I knew there had been no reason for my dream."

"Describe the sound you heard after that."

"Why, I didn't hear any, sir. Not a thing after that but the little bubble along the ship of the waters outside."

"Didn't you mention hearing a cry?"

"No, sir! Oh, no! Nothing like one. All was quiet, so I soon fell asleep again. No queer sound first nor last."

Salter persisted, and asked other questions, but Jerry met his words and questions with frank composure, and he was finally allowed to go, carrying word that Axlon was to come next.

"You will notice, Mr. Wilkinson," said the Captain, looking at the recorder with a satisfied smile, "that I dealt with Jerry in a way different from my treatment of the previous witnesses. He is not of their mental ability, and most of my questions were without foundation, mere traps based on nothing."

"Did you get what was wanted in your trap, sir?" asked Wilkinson, curtly.

"What I wanted was facts."

The mate meditated, uneasy because Eveline's name had been dragged into the case, but unable to understand more than that.

Axlon arrived, big, bluff, brutal of face, composed but respectful. The Captain motioned to the witness chair.

"Now," said Salter, "that recent quarrel with Asa Striker, before he was wounded by the falling spar. You teased him, he resented it, and the two of you fell a-grapple. Mr. Lake came, thrust a foot between you and tripped both, whereupon Striker drew his knife. Axlon, was that sufficient cause for you to kill the man as you did?"

"Huh!" grumbled the sailor. "It surely was no cause, and I've never harmed him for it. He didn't draw that knife on me, either, but on Mr. Lake. Bless you, sir, why should I hold a grudge against Asa? I started it all by teasing him out of idle sport; so, I being the offender, why should I do him harm for it?"

Wilkinson had been suspicious of the big sailor, but, listening and looking now, he was compelled to confess, mentally, that if Axlon was guilty he was expert at falsehood. The fellow seemed innocent enough.

Salter did not let matters end quickly, and drove various sharp questions at his man, but nothing was gained by it. Denying that he had harmed Striker, the witness really did himself credit.

He was finally dismissed to make way for Stanley Lake. The recorder had become ill at ease. To him the procedure began to look like a real court of law, and the many questions of the notary, combined, showed a skill at handling witnesses that bred apprehensions within him. The witnesses next to come were those in whom he was most interested, and he was worried by the possibility that Salter had something definite to guide him from that time.

Lake appeared, outwardly calm, tho he sent a swift, questioning glance at Wilkinson that was suggestive, and almost as if he were seeking the eyes of a friend to learn how much trouble was afoot.

"Pray be seated, sir," said the Captain, courteously. "It is very awkward to have to go thru this course, but, of course, it will satisfy Mr. Gladden better if we act as we do. When we used to sit at table here, easy and careless, we didn't look forward to this."

"We didn't know you were disguised!" returned Lake, tartly.

"Disguised?"

"A notarial wolf in the wool of a shipmaster lamb."

"Oh, I see, Mr. Lake," Salter replied. "The joke is not bad. Not so bad as Striker's course when he pulled his knife upon you."

"Nonsense!" retorted the passenger. "Poor Striker was only nervous."

"Did you ever make it up with him?"

"I obeyed your definite order, and it was this—to drop the whole affair."

"Rather well said, Mr. Lake. But you admit that Asa and you did not talk it over and bury your grudge?"

"There was no grudge."

The Captain ran his hand into the table drawer and brought out an unkindly looking, long-bladed knife. He laid it on the table, then lifted it, drove the point into the wood and left it standing erect.

"The weapon," he said evenly, "with which Striker menaced you, and with which he was subsequently murdered!"

CHAPTER XII.

SALTER'S face had become hawklike, and his eyes bored at Lake as if seeking to detect a guilty start or a shrinking from the fatal knife, but the passenger remained as calm as before.

"I see, Captain," he remarked sarcastically, "that you are something more than mariner and notary."

"What do you mean?" Salter returned.

"An actor, tho I hardly know whether to class your efforts as melodrama or comedy."

Wilkinson frowned warningly at the bold speaker. For some reason Lake was determined to be openly antagonistic, and it certainly was imprudent. He was not bettering his position.

"Which," was Salter's instant, cold demand, "were you when you clad yourself, the hour of the murder, in your gray coat, went to Striker's room and—what else did you do there?"

"Captain, you are having a worrisome dream. When I went to bed I fell asleep and had the night out in that way. I did not clothe myself in my gray coat, nor go to the sailor's room, nor perform the 'what else' that seems so dear to your exuberant fancy."

Wilkinson sat spellbound. The situation was critical, and he eyed the men alternately, startled and apprehensive of the future.

The questioner thrust his hand into the table drawer again and brought out a bit of fabric, gray of color, scant of material, but far from insignificant.

"Striker's room has two berths, as you will remember," he went on quietly, still watching the man he was harassing. "The one berth is directly above the other. What you, perhaps, do not know, is that a short end of a small nail projects obliquely downward from the upper berth, a loosening of the construction of the frame. If a man wished to stab another man who was lying in the lower berth, he must, to strike a sure blow, raise his arm high and drive forcibly. The arm must inevitably pass near the upper frame, and, if swung right, near the nail. When Striker was stabbed the sleeve met the nail and this fragment was torn away."

"Away from what?" scoffed Lake.

"Your coat!"

"Perhaps you can prove that."

"We will see. I have taken the liberty to act already. Take notice!"

Reaching out to the chair beside where he sat the Captain threw aside a steamer shawl and revealed a coat beneath it. This he placed on the table between them, and turned the right sleeve to suit his purpose.

"You will observe a slight rent in the fabric," he pursued calmly. "Now, I lay alongside that rent the fragment secured from the nail. Mark how well it fits. Mark the correspondence of color. Are the two pieces of goods the same?"

If Lake was alarmed he did not betray the fact. Rising, he bent forward over the table and looked for himself. His comparison was careful and long, tho Wilkinson, further away, had no doubt from the beginning. When satisfied Lake spoke freely.

"Same goods! Did you have much difficulty, Captain, when alone hereabouts,

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in tearing that fragment away by driving it against the nail?"

"Meaning—what?"

"That there is nobody else so insanely eager to succeed in a new fad as a hopeless novice."

"Will you be more specific?"

"Yes. It would be easy to yank the coat against the nail so roughly that the tear would be made, and possibly somebody has done so. A novice with a fad might be tempted to do it in order to manufacture evidence and set himself up as a great detective. Are you really a notary?"

"Do you doubt it?"

"How can a man be a sea captain and a land notary at the same time?"

"It would be difficult, sir. Yet, it is simple, especially in the days of young California, for a man to abandon the sea, set up as an officer of law on land, and then finally learn that the call of the sea was so insistent that he must go back to a ship."

Salter pushed the book that lay near him toward Lake.

"The laws of California," he explained. "If you will look at the fly leaf you will find my name there. Yes, and my address."

"What town?"

"Saraconito. Do you doubt me?"

Little did Lake suspect how momentous his reply was to be. Salter did not know how general the knowledge was in the ship that he claimed to be from Saraconito, but perhaps Lake had not known until now. Being a resident of the State he might have acquaintance in Saraconito and be aware that nobody named Ambrose G. Salter had ever lived there, much less have been a notary there.

If Lake knew, exposure would be certain and quick, and the Captain would be branded as a liar and a fraud. Exposure meant the end of the legal work so alluring to the mariner, and, when that was over with, no reason remained why the pirates should not butcher the passengers to a man and seize the Lively Lucy. Everything depended upon hasty-tempered Lake's answer.

Glancing at Wilkinson he received a warning look and took counsel of prudence. Again bending his regard upon Salter, he noted that man's sharp scrutiny and suddenly broke into a light laugh.

"This is absurd!" he cried. "Answering your question, I should be dull-witted to challenge the history of a man upon whom Mr. Glidden has set the seal of his approval, but you do not know that I came down here in ill temper and was not in mood to be pleased with catechism. You must admit this is not a legal trial court."

"I certainly admit it, as I've said to Mr. Gladden. A California notary has no jurisdiction on the deep sea. All that the most ardent of us want is to have prompt, preliminary investigation."

Salter spoke without visible animosity, and Lake smiled again.

"Let me apologize for my temper. Horatio Marx had just dropped my pipe overboard, and as I couldn't pound him for his carelessness, I was out of sorts and vented my irritation on you. I apologize. That, however, leaves me still on the judicial rack. If you think I killed Asa Striker you are all wrong.'"

"Necessarily, I must believe you."

"Why necessarily?"

"Because you are the guest of the ship's charterer."

"An easy alibi!" said Lake, laughing.

"Nevertheless, if you can explain——"

"A hard thing to do, Captain. That's my coat, and the fragment must be a part of it, but I'll swear I did not leave my room at any time last night, nor do I know how the bit got on that nail."

"Run your mind over the night," Salter urged. "What did you hear? There must have been minutes when you were awake——"

"No. When I turn in I make a business of sleeping."

"Let's go over it further," Salter persisted, his tones gentle.

They did so, quietly and with outward amicability, discussing matters at length. Wilkinson, listening and watching, was not impressed by their even exchange of words. Somehow, the impression was strong with him that Lake had not explained his sharpness at the beginning truthfully, and he was certain that the Captain felt little of the friendly consideration he was suddenly showing.

Again, there were questions added that were either thoughtful in a commonplace way or traps for Lake, but they caught no prey. The witness had no important evidence to give, and, like all others in the ship, he had slept tremendously that fatal night.

When the notary rested it was abruptly, and he amicably accompanied Lake to the deck. The recorder wondered if it was to prevent the latest testifier from giving information to whoever might follow.

There was but little delay. Salter reappeared, and Wilkinson's nerves took on a small thrill when he saw that the mariner's companion was Eveline. The mate frowned. Was she to be subjected to an ordeal equal to Lake's? If so, he was resolved that the presiding officer should again be reminded that he had no legal jurisdiction.

Salter had concealed the knife and the coat, and there was nothing alarming to be seen except the book of laws, but Eveline's expression was pathetic and frightened as she looked at him.

"Now, Miss Gladden," said Salter, smoothly, "I will delay you but a moment. Of course I have to call everybody. Pray humor me briefly."

He moved the book so its title would be more conspicuous.

"Now," he added, "when you came out into the cabin last night to get your jewel, and saw Lake leaving Striker's room, was he moving in haste?"

CHAPTER XIII.

WILKINSON had been impressed by the fact that Captain Salter, always showing a degree of skill in manner, even when his words seemed most commonplace, had proceeded with each witness in a different manner. From this he had hoped that Eveline, being the daughter of Mr. Gladden, would receive unusually considerate treatment, and he was wholly unprepared for the opening. Without being harsh, Salter flung his question direct and keenly, his tone as startling as his words.

Eveline shrank from the unexpected swift inquiry, and color left her face noticeably. Wilkinson, on the other hand, flushed hotly. She was his promised wife, and the Captain's even voice did not hide the fact that his attack was a harsh trial. Barely choking back a sharp reproof, the mate waited anxiously.

"What do you mean, sir?" asked the girl, faintly.

"I will repeat," Salter answered quietly. "When, last night, you came into the cabin to get the jewel you had left on this table, and saw Lake leaving Striker's room, was he moving in haste?"

"I did not see him leaving the room," she asserted.

"Then what was he doing?"

"I suppose," and she began to gather courage, "that he was asleep in his own stateroom."

"Was he not in Striker's room?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Did you speak with him?"

"With Mr. Lake?"

"Yes."

"I certainly did not, because——"

"But you admit that you saw him somewhere there?"

The color came back to Eveline's face and her eyes began to sparkle.

"I admit nothing of the sort, for I did not see him——"

"Had Striker's death groans died away?"

"I heard no groans then or at any other time."

"Then why did you start toward his room and then change your mind and run back to your own quarters?"

"Why shouldn't I, if I saw you standing over Striker with a knife, and then saw you strike the blow?"

"Eh?"

"What secret did that humble sailor hold that you need to kill him?"

Silence! The cabin was so still that the lipping chug-chug of the outside waters against the hull was plainly to be heard, tho nobody there heeded it then, nor heard it. Wilkinson, bewildered and spellbound, stared and waited in confusion.

For a moment Salter's expression was more piratical than notarial, tho his glare at the girl did not make her shrink. Then he smiled grimly and made a slight gesture.

"I see, Miss Gladden," he returned, "that you have an abundant fund of imagination."

"Why," she asked, with spirit, "shouldn't I conjure up wild fancies and ask absurd questions as well as you? I am not in a court of law, and you haven't the slightest authority over me. Nobody else pities Striker more than I do, and I shall be glad to help in this case, but I insist upon proper procedures. Ask me what I know and I will tell, but if you assume a lot of nightmare things that never happened, you can't blame me if I retort. Of course I didn't see you kill Striker, and I saw nobody else kill him. Neither did I hear any groans. During the night I remembered that I had left my finger ring on the cabin table, and, putting on my blue dress, went and got the ring. Nobody else was in the cabin, so you will see that nobody came out of Striker's room. Now, if you wish me to enlarge upon what I've told you, proceed. But don't let us fall to dreaming opium dreams."

Wilkinson smiled grimly. If her manner and words were irregular, so was the court procedure, and anything was, in a way, permissible. She had spoken with subdued energy, but with the refinement of her class, and, having spoken, became silent.

What Salter thought was not to be told by study of his strong face. He heard, meditated for a moment, and calmly answered:

"It is for you to decide how much you are willing to tell, Miss Gladden. A full statement cannot be demanded where there is no law. If you wish to have matters left like this, I agree. Thank you for your kindness in deposing. When you reach the deck will you please send your sister here?"

"You intimate that I am keeping something back."

"Oh! I said this was an informal hearing."

"I have told what I know. Can I tell more?" Eveline demanded.

"Hardly!"

"Sir, I am not pleased with your insinuations."

"They can easily be passed by."

"No, sir! I want to know your meaning."

"At this rate we shall get into deep waters. A judge is not usually interrogated by a witness. If I have misused you, explain your grievance to Mr. Gladden, and I will talk with him."

Salter rose, bowed politely, and motioned toward the companionway.

"That is all, Miss Gladden. Will you kindly say to your sister that I will be glad to question her next?"

Eveline, uncertain and perplexed, hesitated for a moment and then went away. She felt that her examination had gone to wreck most decidedly, and so oddly that, in her existing confusion,

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she was not certain whether she was glad or sorry.

Salter turned to Wilkinson, who poised his pen and prepared to do his usual task as recorder.

"Write," said the Captain, evenly, "that Miss Gladden has been heard. After her name put this: 'No comment!' "

The mate wrote, but very slowly. Instead of Salter's usual summing up he was to put down that brief, obscure record—"No comment!" Greatly he wondered what it really stood for, and wondered what was in the captain-notary's mind. What, in Salter's opinion, had been gained or lost by the so-called examination of Eveline? Uneasiness was in Wilkinson's mind.

When Agatha came, Salter took up her examination with unruffled voice and manner, and his catechism was close, but she had nothing to tell. he made no insinuations against her, and nothing new was developed.

"Now, Mr. Wilkinson," said the Captain, when they were left alone, "I will take your notes and you may go."

"May I ask, sir, if you have arrived at any conclusion?"

"I must consider the various points before that can be answered."

The reply was matter of fact, but the mate knew he was politely rebuffed, and let it go at that. Leaving the cabin, he tried to run the evidence over, but did not find it easy to read anything from it, nor was he able to decide whether Salter was satisfied with results.

Later Mr. Gladden talked with the Captain, but, tho the latter was ready of speech, he gave no enlightenment as to his official judgment.

"We must wait a while," he said in conclusion.

"You know best, Salter, but there is comment among the passengers because you called only one of your sailors."

"There are two reasons for that. First, the sailors are not allowed in the cabin, as you know, and I am sure not one of them could slip below unseen. More to the point, I have talked with them collectively, and I exonerate all, with the possible exception of Axion."

"Do you really suspect him?"

"We must wait, sir, we must wait!"

Salter was more communicative when he had private speech with Haggett. That grim old freebooter considered the matter a rich joke, and he grinned widely as he looked at his superior.

"Did you have a good time down there?" he asked.

"Great!" replied the chief, in high good humor. "It is more than ever clear that my true calling was the law. I knew it when I was clerk to the attorney in my youth, but I've proved it practically now. Born to follow the law was I, Haggett. When a man thirsts for water he needs water. When he thirsts to be a legal man he needs to be one."

"I haven't heard that you have unearthed the man who killed Striker."

"Wait! The query is narrowed down to a very few, and I have my mind well fixed as to who else will be dropped out of consideration. Be patient, man, and I'll reveal the slayer."

"Think so?"

"I know it."

"But look here, Blackington——"

"Get that name out of your memory for now."

"Right! I forgot myself. What I wanted to say is, as long as we lie alongside this island, and you've been speaking of delay, we shall be in danger. Little Nero may come and, having recognized us, make the situation clear to Gladden. Or, tho we are not sure that infernal warship is now within a thousand miles of us, it may still be hunting pirates, and appear here."

"We have lookouts on land," Salter reminded.

"Can they see at night?"

"As well as any warship. Don't worry, Haggett, we will not allow ourselves to be surprised to our hurt."

"Huh! You've got the overconfidence of a blind bull."

"I don't know about him, and I'm inclined to challenge your item in cattle history, but pass it by. Don't worry about being surprised."

"How long do you think the old members of our crew will be content to lie here like sleeping snails?"

"Do they grumble?" snapped Salter.

"No."

"When they do I'll attend to them. I allow no man to growl against my decisions, as you've seen in the past. If they get rebellious I'll settle the trouble with lead. We can afford to lose one or two, if discipline demands. No man rebels against Blackington and lives to repeat it. If a grumble arises, Haggett, remind them of that."

"Have your own way," said the mate, ill-temperedly. "Anyhow, they might drop a boat and desert."

"Well thought of, so hide the oars. We'll have no such work here. I'm the man to say when we leave, and if anybody thinks different he will forget mutiny as soon as I level my revolver at him."

"All right, Captain. All hands know your way. I reckon there will be no rebellion."

CHAPTER XIV.

THUS far there was no discontent among Salter's old crew. The fight with the warship, the following wreck and the danger when ashore had tamed them a trifle, and certain promises made by their chief had kept them waiting cheerfully for his word to get under sail again.

Captain and passengers met at the supper table as usual, and no one dealt in sharp looks or words. Prudence demanded reciprocal civility, as all realized. Investigation of the late murder seemed to be sleeping.

The next morning Striker's body, sewed in a hammock and weighted, was taken a short distance out to sea and sunk forever from human sight. The educated man, whose identity was known to no one there, was, after his troubled life, given a watery grave by pirate hands.

As soon as it was over with Salter went ashore. He had many things on his mind, some of which were unsuspected by his associates, but he was not so much centered on any one point as to forget vigilance.

Visiting the various ridge lookouts, one after the other, he trained his seaglass and looked long and critically. View was had from an elevation well above the tops of the adjacent trees, but not even a fleck on the horizon suggested that a vessel might be in the outlying waters.

When he descended from the remotest lookout he took a notion to walk a while, for the woods lured him. He went, glancing right and left at the trees, bushes and varied plants, but had advanced only a few yards when something halted him.

Near the base of a spur of the ridge a man was bent low, and seemed to be peering under some cover. It was not until he righted himself that Salter recognized Horatio Marx. He moved on, and Salter, still looking, saw the movement repeated three times. The base of the ridge clearly had some strong attraction for him.

"I wonder what?" mused the Captain. "Not being a child, he must have a man's reason. If he thinks that caves and recesses here contain nuggets of gold he certainly is no expert miner. This is hundreds of miles from California."

Marx's course was not that which Salter wished to pursue, and he lost sight of the man as he walked along, falling into his former mood.

"Big Pelican is good to look upon," he murmured. "A man of quiet tastes might occupy it for his home, summon some luxuries and live here content—if, I say, he was of quiet tastes. It wouldn't suit me. Give me a place of action. Nobody could be notary, lawyer or judge here. Judge! That is a lofty mark to aim at. From notary to lawyer, and lawyer to judge is not so difficult a stride. Ah-h!"

Deep in thought he held his way, but finally arrived at an arm of water that cut off further direct advance. Parting the leaves of a thick belt of saplings, he saw an inlet four rods wide. The sea had easy access, and was being driven in light waves by the northeast breeze. Trees were on all sides.

It was not an unusual place, and he was about to turn back when his roving gaze caught something else, a few yards to his right hand. Hard against the land was a boat, and in it he could see the motionless legs of a man. Outstanding bushes hid the rest.

Interest was keenly aroused, and he shifted position to get closer. It was the movement of but a moment, and he stood looking down at a dead man who lay across the gunwale, his body partly on land.

Salter read the signs quickly. There was blood in the boat and on the man, while in an extended hand was the free end of the boat's painter, with a single bight around a small tree.

"Died while trying to make fast! He was seriously wounded, and tho he got along after a fashion while in the boat, the strain of trying to crawl out reopened the wound and he bled to death like a flash. Well, that's an end of him!"

The body lay face downward, but he turned it over, feeling languid curiosity to see the leaf-hidden face. He saw, and then started violently.

"Little Nero!" he exclaimed, amazed.

He knew the slightly built, face-scarred, brutal-featured pirate captain too well to be mistaken, They had sailed together for many years, and had been friends, after their way, until Little Nero ran away and left his fellow freebooters to fight the warship without his help. By running he had saved himself and his vessel from hard hammering from Government shots, and had remained the powerful master of the brigantine Clear the Way. Now Little Nero lay in dirt and blood, dead!

Salter was a man of the seas, and had seen many strange happenings, but this condition perplexed him greatly for some time. His mind was busy, however, and finally he constructed a theory to account for it that seemed to be the only one open to belief. It had many missing links, but the main points fitted fairly well.

"When Little Nero chased us, he and his ship and crew were in good condition. He must have met the warship later, been attacked, and his outfit shot to pieces. Probably it was night, so he managed to get to this boat while his mates were making their last vain fight, deserting them as he once deserted Red Roger and me, and, in spite of his wound, contrived to step the mast and get up the sail. After that, with the weather as it has been, he had easy work to run this way. Possibly he had the island in mind, but more likely he merely took the easiest course, and sighted Big Pelican by chance, but when he crawled over the gunwale to make fast, his poorly bandaged wound reopened and he bled to death offhand. Exit Little Nero!"

He touched the body critically.

"Has been dead only a few hours. Probably made the island at night and hauled into this inlet by the first faint streaks of day. That's why he was not sighted by my lookouts. But the boat—the boat!"

Its type was too well known to him to require attention, but its presence there puzzled him greatly at first.

"No ship's boat, that, but a regular catboat. Now, how did he come by it? Well, possibly he found it adrift before his last fight and, as it's mighty trim and stanch, picked it up and had it in tow, astern, when the warship got after him. Just the thing for his use when he decided to desert his mates. Yes, and he could sail the whole ocean in it, alone, if in health. Ah-h!"

Changes passed swiftly over the chief's face as new ideas came.

"Better than any jolly-boat or other ship's craft," he mused, his face keen, alert and enthusiastic. "The right man could sail in her from here to California. Ah-h!"

Breaking away he made the circuit of the inlet, to see where the overhanging bushes overhung the most, and finally found an ideal spot under a sharply reclining tree, whereupon he returned to the catboat.

Entering, he looked and found the water noticeably dark. Using the painter he sounded and made two full fathoms. He went ashore again, found a heavy stone and enough of stout vines and, with the latter, made the weight fast to the body. Oars were aboard, and he pulled to the middle of the watery belt. Again sounding, he estimated a depth of twenty-two feet.

"Perfectly safe! The tide never leaves this place bare. I'll finish!"

He lifted the body a little and dropped it over the gunwale. The water received its new burden, parted, reclosed, and the clay that had been Little Nero sank forever from sight.

Forgetting him quickly, Salter surveyed the boat, noting her admirable lines, and, more vaguely, that she was gray-colored to the bows, which were painted a bright blue, an odd combination of hues.

Rowing again, he sent the boat to the spot already selected. As the craft was twenty feet long and had due beam, it was not easy to do the rest, but he finally brought it under the reclining tree and the thick cover of bushes and vines. When he had snugged it against the land it was invisible to everything but a close, systematic search.

"I reckon," he said, smiling contentedly, "I couldn't find another nook on Big Pelican where I could do that, but this recess must have been made for me. A big boat and a big nook to fit. Wonders will never cease!"

He arranged the lowered mast, the sail, the oars, the painter and other objects to suit his fancy and was done.

"Add a compass, food and water to what is already here, and one man could sail the blue-breasted beauty alone to California. I wonder if any man will do it?"

With a final touch at the screening bushes, he turned and walked away, his hands crossed behind his back, his head bent in thought.

"There are various trades in this life," he mused. "One is piracy. Usually a jolly life for all except victims, but full of rough knocks. The Government has sworn to clear the Pacific of free-rovers, and Red Roger and Little Nero are already dead. A dangerous trade! Now, the law is a trade pursued on land, and far more fascinating than piracy. It is not always thrilling, but is deeply delightful. From notary to lawyer, from lawyer to judge, and then—who knows? Ah! One man can sail a catboat!"

This strange story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Come to Stay.

Doris was radiant over a recent addition to the family, and rushed out of the house to tell the news to a passing neighbor.

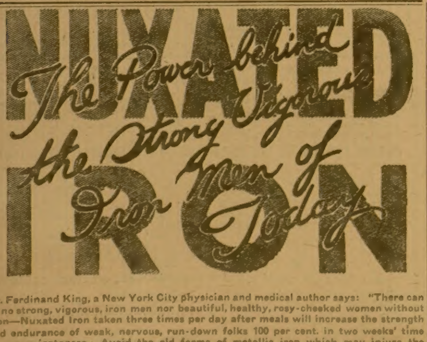
"Oh, you don't know what we've got upstairs!" she cried.

"What is it?"

"It's a new baby brother!" And expectantly she watched the effect of her announcement.

"You don't say so! Is he going to stay?"

"I think so"—very thoughtfully. "He's got his things off!"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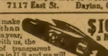

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The Windfair Mystery.

(Continued From Page 4.)

Pettyberg. "May I have your cousin after Mr. Woolcraft?"

"Certainly," spoke up Miss Edge.

"Then you will want me?" asked Mrs. Woolcraft, in her gentle, musical voice.

"No, not then," he answered hastily, not looking at her. "There is an old family servant—a cook, I believe——"

"Yes," Mr. Pettyberg nodded. "You shall have her after Miss Edge."

"And the maid—has she been here long?"

"A year."

"Then I shall want to talk to her."

"And then me?" asked Mrs. Woolcraft, quietly.

"That man who carried my suitcase upstairs"

"He's the gardener and man-of-all-work, and lives in another part of town; he has never lived in the house and has never passed a night here. But if you want him, I'll telephone him to come over."

"I want him," said "Kellogg," decidedly. "Is there anybody else? I mean, any one who can be considered even remotely a member of the household?"

Mr. Pettyberg rose from the table, shaking his head. All rose, for the meal was at an end.

"I am afraid," said Mrs. Woolcraft with a little smile, a pale reflection of her girlhood's flashing light, "that you must take me after the gardener, Mr. Kellogg"

How well he remembered the playful touch in her voice! Instead of awakening a responsive smile, it brought a mist to his eyes, and he bowed assent, not trusting himself to speak.

Once in the hall, he regretted that he had not asked for Mrs. Woolcraft before the others. What impulse had made him determined to reserve her for the last? He hardly knew. His greatest danger, he thought, would leap at him when their eyes met, when they were alone in that room where their love had been pledged. But it was not cowardice that had prompted him to put her off; it might have sprung from the instinct to hold his emotions in abeyance, that he might taste them to the uttermost, the few minutes that were to realize his troubled dreams—the quarter-hour or half-hour that would find him and her once more alone together.

This remarkable story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Handy Volume.

"A lawyer needs lots of books," observed the young barrister.

"Certainly he does," agreed the rich and experienced old lawyer. "Especially a young lawyer. He needs lots of books, large and weighty books, to stand on when he wants to close a transom, or to use for propping a door open. Yes, and he needs a big book for a pillow if the worst comes and he sleeps in his office."

"Books are a treasure and comfort as well as a necessity," insisted the young [illegible] enthusiastically.

"Sure," answered the agreeable old gentleman. "No family should be without them. A law book may prove extremely useful around the house. It is often used on a chair to make it the proper height for piano duets. I've seen a law book used to represent bombardments and such things at amateur theatricals, also.

"Many a dollar I've saved when I didn't have a dollar by using a good heavy book as a trouser presser. Old Blackstone, that fine, learned old gentleman has pressed numerous pairs of trousers for me. Does good work, too.

"On one occasion there was a terrible predicament in the apartment house where I stayed. The dumb waiter was stuck and there was grub in it. It had become fixed between two floors and wouldn't go up or down. They tried everything and then came to me for advice. Immediately I thought of my Blackstone. 'I will consult him, that wise and reverend old gentleman,' I said.

"'We haven't time for you to read that volume,' said my neighbor in distress. 'We're hungry and that is our dinner in the dumb waiter there.'

"'I hope to get all my dinners out of this Blackstone,' I replied. 'I'm sure there's many a dinner tucked away in this book.'

"'It won't move the elevator,' cried the distracted folk.

"Then I dropped the Blackstone down the shaft. It hit the dumb waiter right in the middle and all opposition was crushed to the ground. To this day Blackstone is revered among those people.

"Another time a burglar entered our house. I saw the man stealing up the stairway. Just as he turned at the last landing I dropped my Blackstone on him. That took the wind out of him, just as it always does whenever I use it on an enemy as an instrument of defense."

A MORNING SONG.

You saw [illegible]
And woke me early, sister day!
You came in all your lovely pride,
With laughing looks that I ad[illegible]
With wings of blue and gray,
With sunshine skirts that swept the floor,
With songs to drive night's dreams away.
You called me out to pl[illegible]
And so I took you by the [illegible]
And found the way to fairyland.
With such impatient feet I climb
The ladders of delight!
For well I know that ruthless time
Turns morning moods to tears and night.

* * *

THEY FOUND OUT.

"Well, how was the party last night?" Caroline's family inquired jointly and severally as she descended to breakfast [illegible] as the others finished.

Caroline surveyed them coldly. "Oh, [illegible]e!" she said at last, and attacked her grapefruit forthwith.

"[illegible]" murmured the father of the [illegible] "Didn't you have a good time?"

"Why," she looked up long enough to say, "of course I had a good time! You always have a good time at parties. That's what you go for!"

"Well," her mother remarked, "somehow, your remarks don't sound as if the affair had been very joyous! Usually you have so much to tell about it when you go out [illegible]"

"My goodness!" cried the daughter of the house, disgustedly. "I don't see why you act so! I should think you'd be glad I didn't bother you with a lot of silly talk! Everybody here is always telling me I talk too much, anyhow. What's the use of talking if there isn't anything to say?"

"No use at all," her mother said hastily. "Only ——"

"Well," Caroline proceeded aggrievedly, "I'd like to know the sense in my coming down, clapping my hands and shrieking that I had such a splendiferous, gle-orious time at Aline's party! It would just sound silly"

"Did you dance?" asked her father cautiously.

"Of course I danced!" his daughter told him shortly.

"Weren't your partners nice? Who were they?"

"Oh," said Caroline, languidly, "I danced with that nutty Arthur White—he has his nails all manicured pink and shiny like a girl's, and he is perfectly silly! I don't see why the girls are so crazy about him! He makes me tired! And, of course, I had to dance with Paul, Aline's brother, because she was giving the party.

"Honestly, I never knew another human being who spent so much time walking on other people's feet when there is so much unoccupied space going to waste everywhere. No matter which way a girl puts her feet, Paul manages to step on them, and then he gets redder and tries to apologize and steps on you some more! And he breathes hard all the time, as tho he was going to die right away or something, and he's perfectly awful! I had to dance three times with him, because the other girls managed to get out of the way quicker than I could

"I saw Bob Gresham in time, tho. I opened the coat closet door under the front stairs and got in there while he looked all around for me

"What on earth——"

"Well!" exclaimed Caroline, indignantly, "you don't mean to say you want me to dance with Bob Gresham? Why, his head doesn't come to my shoulder! He's only as big as a minute! Why, a girl looks silly trying to dance with him, and he won't be snubbed or anything! All the girls run away if they have a chance! My goodness! Why, if you saw Bob Gresham, I guess you wouldn't think it queer I didn't want to dance with him!"

"I suppose you had lovely refreshments," diplomatically suggested her mother.

Caroline sighed. "I'm getting awfully tired of French pastries," she said. "The kind with whipped cream and cherries and preserved candies and everything! Yes, I know I did like them once, but I'm getting too old for them now! And there were so many kinds of cake that it was a nuisance making up your mind, and it seems to me I've had chicken salad a thousand times! And they had an awful orchestra of six pieces, and heaps [illegible] flowers all over."

[illegible] lovely party," care- [illegible]r fath[illegible]

[illegible] mother anxiously [illegible]ing her daughter carefully. [illegible] the matter. Does your head ache, Caroline? You seem to have no appetite this morning, either."

"Aw," said Jimmy from the next room, where he was skimming thru his arithmetic lesson again before streaking for school, "aw, Caroline's sore because that dub Howard Angle wasn't at the party, after all! And she expected him and everything!"

In the awful, comprehensive silence that fell, Caroline's father and mother stared wildly at each other. The father of the family recovered first

"D-d-did you read that remarkable editorial dear?" he stuttered at his wife. "It's so clear that I really must read it to you—listen!"

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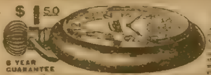

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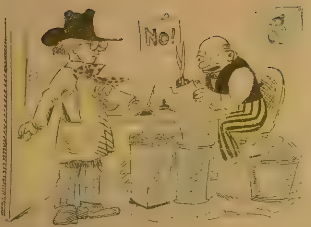


Poet—"And did you happen to know, sir, that several poets have been killed in the trenches?"
Editor—"No; but I'm not surprised! I knew editors were enlisting!"

The Job Was His.

Poor old Bill was a first-rate woodworker, but old age crept upon him, and consequently unemployment. One day he applied for a job at a big establishment, and was interviewed by the overseer, who was well known for his caustic utterances.

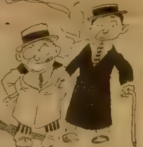
"Well, what do you want?"

"I want work," replied the applicant.

"H'm! And what kind of work can you do?"

"Well, sir, I can make all sorts of joiners' work."

"Then walk right in and start at once! I've been trying for years to make all sorts of joiners work in this place and if you can get any work out of them the job's yours."



"Miss Strongmind is going to marry Percy."

"Why, I saw him today and he didn't say anything about it."

"Oh, Percy doesn't know it yet!"

An Ardent Lover.

"And do you really love me, Cuthbert?" she asked.

"Love you?" repeated Cuthbert, fervently. "Why, while I was bidding you good-by in the passage last night, dear, the dog bit a large chunk out of my leg and I never noticed it until I got home."

TRIOLETS OF TRIBULATION.

Sadly, the Bard—
  Old G. W. Sadly—
Oh, it was hard!
Sadly the bard
  (He wrote by the yard)
  Took the note, gladly.
Sadly the Bard,
  Old G. W. Sadly.

He gave it one stare,
  Then had a conniption.
Went up in the air,
And eke tore his hair,
For no check was there,
  But a bill for subscription!
He gave it one stare,
  Then had a conniption!

He Knew From Experience.

The teacher was trying to make his pupils understand that all good comes from one source. As an illustration, he told them of building a house and putting water pipes with faucets in all the rooms, these pipes not being connected with the main in the street.

"Suppose I turn on a faucet and no water comes, what is the matter?"

He naturally supposed that some of the boys would answer that the water was not turned on at the main, but they didn't.

On the contrary, one boy at the foot of the class called out: "You didn't pay your water bill!"

Quick Retort.

An Englishman entered a public house with a dog, and an Irishman asked what breed it was.

Insolently the owner looked the questioner up and down, and then replied, with a drawl:

"It's a cross between an ape and an Irishman."

"Faith, thin, we're both related to the beast," was the Irishman's quick retort.

Reward of the Meek.

"Blessed are the meek," quoted the deacon, in reproving a backslider, "for they shall inherit the earth."

"They may inherit all right, deacon," said the irreverent one, "but somehow or other they never seem to get possession."

Lots of Chief Justices.

Judge Isaac Franklin Russell, chief justice of the Court of Special Sessions of New York, has to make a personal supervision of penal institutions, among them insane asylums, as one of his official duties. He went to the White Plains asylum recently on a tour of inspection and found a strange guard at the entrance, an old friend of his having been discharged.

Judge Russell told the guard he wished to be admitted.

"Can't do it," was the answer.

"But I have business here," said the judge. "I come from New York."

"We've got 200 in here now who came from there," answered the other.

"I'm afraid you do not know who I am," ventured the judge, getting tired of the guard's belligerent attitude. "I am chief justice of the Court of Special Sessions."

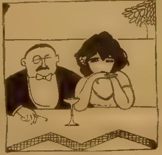
"Cut it, cut it!" broke in the other. "We've got three men inside now who say they're chief justices."

Why He Resisted.

The Navy's newest recruit was hauled before the commandant of the naval barracks on a charge of insubordination. The petty officer explained that the man had resisted when they took him to the swimming baths for the first lesson in the art of natation.

"What have you got to say for yourself?" asked the commandant.

"Well, sir, it's like this 'ere. I've only bin in the Navy three days. The first day the doctor drawed six of me teeth out, the second day I was 'oculated, and this mornin' the petty officer comes along to me an' he says, 'Come on, you pup, we're a-goin' ter drown yer.'"



"What selection is that the orchestra has just finished?"

"I don't know. Sounded to me like neuralgia expressed in music."

All Arranged.

An Irish recruit named Dunn was arranging to let his friends know where he was when on active service.

"If I go to France," he said, "I shall sign my letter F. Dunn, to Egypt, E. Dunn."

"When the war is over and you come home, what will you sign?"

"We're Dunn!"

"Well done," shouted his friends.

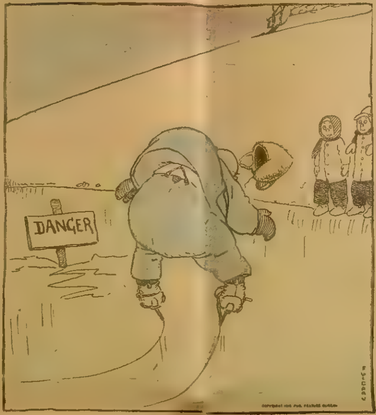
Eileen's Choice.

Eileen—"When I get big I shall marry a doctor or a minister."

Doris—"Why, dear?"

Eileen—"Because if I marry a doctor I can get well for nothing, and if I marry a preacher I can be good for nothing."

"BEN BOLT"---The Kid That You Were Yourself.



Don't you remember that [illegible] Ben Bolt,
  That winter Pa taught us to skate?
He did pretty nice till he struck the thin ice,
  Then he sort of began to gyrate.

UNDER DOG.

Yes, Rollo, help the under dog,
  In an unequal fight,
Provided that the said canine
  Is surely in the right.
And, further, if the upper dog
  Is fixed so he can't bite.

But otherwise, a pacifist
  Must you be, hating war.
And, just to prove the folly of
  The game that you abhor,
While they are fighting, you make off
  With what they're fighting for.

Safety First.

"Nora," said the mistress, "this is my most expensive china. If you break a plate in this set it will be equivalent to your dismissal."

"Yes, mum, I understand. Might I suggest, mum, that you keep them pieces locked up where I can't get at 'em?"

Afraid.

"Does your husband believe in prohibition?"

"About the same as he does in ghosts. He admits that there might be such a thing, and the mention of it scares him dreadfully."

Do Tell!

He—"So you let Lieut. Topple kiss you?"

She—"Yes. How do you know?"

He—"I heard him brag he'd smelt powder."

WHY NOT?

If a man who makes plays is a playwright,
Would a man who makes hay be a haywright?
If a person who fails is a failure,
Would a person who quails be a quailure?
If a person who spends is a spendthrift,
Would a person who lends be a lendthrift?
If drinking too much makes a drunkard,
Would thinking too much make a thunkard?
—Life.

Like Curing Like.

"So Jimmy has been half drowned again, has he, going out in a rowboat against my express order? Well, I'm going to cure him of his love of sea travel by the homeopathic method."

"How's that?"

"I am going to take him to the woodshed with me on a whaling trip."

A Real Heroine.

"Mother!" cried the beautiful girl as she burst into her mother's stateroom. "Mother, I'm a heroine! I saved 3,000 lives!"

"How so?" queried the languid lady lazily. "How [illegible]?"

"Oh, mother, to think of the [illegible] have read Sir Walter Scott [illegible] W. Chambers and the other dead [illegible]ters of romance and wished myself [illegible] the place of their heroines! It has [illegible] the dream of my life. And at [illegible] has come true! I am a heroine!"

"But how, Yasmaline?" put in the petulant parent.

"Oh, mother, the second mate [illegible] officer with the [illegible] brows—the second mate was talking to me on the lee hatchways or somewhere and all of a sudden he demanded a kiss. Of course, I indignantly refused. And then oh, mother, he swore if I didn't kiss him he would sink the ship with all of the 3,000 passengers aboard. Oh, mother, I am a heroine!"

The East Wind

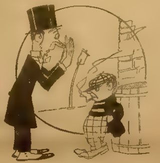
Little Tommy, who is of rather an inquiring turn of mind and who had been [illegible]ing at his father's [illegible] countenance for some [illegible]

"Papa, what [illegible] and [illegible]"

"The east wind, of course," answered papa, rather hastily. "Do not talk so much, Thomas, and pass me the beer."

It was then that a voice came from the other end of the table in dulcet tones, saying:

"Tommy, dear, pass your father the east wind and be careful not to spill it on the cloth."



Mr. Goodnuff—"My boy, when I was your age I didn't smoke in the way you do."

Boy—"I should guess not. Why, there ain't a kid in the alley that kin inhale like me."

Had Written It Down.

"Halt! Who goes there?" came from the sentinel.

"Sure, it's me," replied the raw recruit.

"Who's me?"

"Mike Cohen."

"Advance, Cohen, and give the countersign."

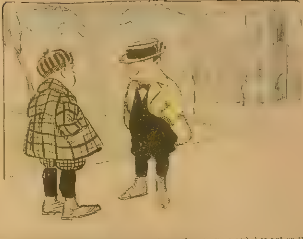
"Sure, I can't; I left it in my other pants!"

Peace on a Volcano.

Peck—"My home has been a perfect haven of peace lately. I've hit on a great scheme."

Friend—"Indeed! What is it?"

Peck—"I make my wife so mad she won't speak to me."



[illegible] t'er gimme a nickel to put on the [illegible] he'd have lost it shoot[illegible]

LADY WITH THE BOOK

Little lady, shy, demure,
  In the seat across the aisle,
With your features fine and pure
  And [illegible]
Lovely [illegible]
  Just one instant from the pa[illegible]
Of that interesting book
  That in reading you [illegible]

[illegible] a mystery is here
  Tho the book on which intent
Is your gaze, oh [illegible] dear,
  Is the well-know[illegible]
Still we wonder, [illegible]
  Damsel of the wicked town,
Yes, we wonder why you should
  Hold the volume upside down.

A Different Name.

"After all," observed the suburb[illegible], "there is little difference between North and South."

"In what way?" inquired his city companion.

"Take the laws for instance."

"What about the[illegible]"

"I notice you have an ordinance in your city to prevent chickens from running at large."

"Yes."

"We have just such a law up in town."

"Indeed."

"Yes, only we don't call it that."

"What do you call it?"

"Curfew."

Serving Notice.

"Norah," said the mistress of [illegible] to the awkward maid, "you [illegible] commit a faux pas like that again."

"Yes, ma'am. But there ain't no use of you givin' it a foreign name, ma'am. I simply tripped on a rug an' spilled the soup. I never was talked to that way before, ma'am, an' if you do it again I'll quit."

The Borrower.

Mrs. Flatbush—"Who is that w[illegible] you just bowed to?"

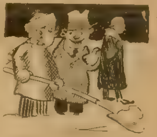
Mrs. Bensonhurst—"Oh, she's my next door neighbor."

"But she didn't return your bow."

"[illegible] she never returns anything."

Flustered

[illegible]ord Charles Beresford tells a sto[illegible] [illegible]ntry inn near [illegible] told the host who [illegible] thus admonished the [illegible] [illegible]ere before and [illegible] [illegible] will ever again. When [illegible] lordship's water up in the [illegible]orning knock several times, and if a [illegible]ce says 'Who is there?' mind you say 'It's the boy, my lord.'" [illegible] was so flustered [illegible] next morning shivering out[illegible] [illegible]ered "Who's [illegible]



"Who were his ancestors?"

"Well, if you bored a hole in his family tree you'd get maple sirup!"

Would Prove Them Wrong.

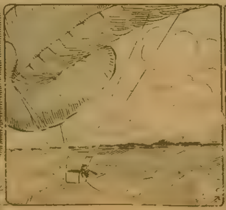
The Village Reprobate—"Both the doctor an' the meenister have prophesied that I wud fill a drunkard's grave [illegible] show them they're wrang."

Visitor—"How splendid of you [illegible] You've made up your mind to be a teetotaler eh?"

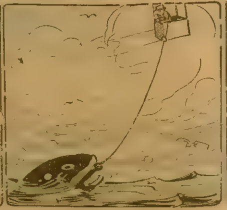
The Village Reprobate—"Na, na. I've made up my mind tae be cremated."

A WHALE OF A YARN

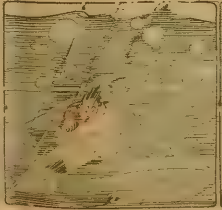
OUR MOVING PICTURE SHOW



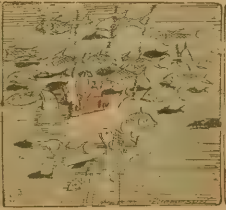
While on observation duty in a captive balloon Sergeant Casey is much annoyed by having his anchor dislodged by a stray shell.



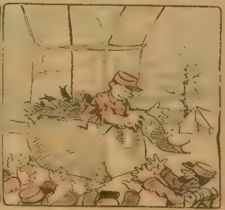
Driven out over the open sea, the said anchor is noticed by a playful young whale, who seizes it in its mouth and starts for the bottom.



The aviator manages finally to cut the rope and the [illegible] start [illegible]ward thru the water with Casey half drowned.



On the way toward the surface of the water Casey passes thru a school of fish on their way to college, and a great number of them are caught in the car.



Arriving at the surface he encounters a favorable breeze which wafts him back over camp, where the load of fish is greatly appreciated.

McGovern's Last Fight

By Leon W. Dean

WHEN Red McGovern deliberately walked across the bunkhouse and accused Larry Mead of blanket stealing, men stopped with pipes halfway to their lips, and waited. Not that the camp was surprised; Red would have to lick the newcomer sooner or later, anyhow, but this seemed just a bit premature and uncalled for. In fine, the camp and Red McGovern seldom agreed on points of etiquette, but Red's was the heavier fist.

The scent of steaming leggins and drying mackinaws drifted thru the room even to the farthermost corner, where crouched the half-breed Jean La Croix. The line of pelting snow gained an inch on the window-pane. Still no one moved. At length, without uttering a word, the man Mead took a step forward and slapped McGovern full in the face. Youngsters scarce turned twenty felt the thrill of the blow, veterans bearing the scars of many a savage shanty [illegible] or barroom broil felt their blood quicken in sympathetic admiration for the man who would face Red McGovern.

McGovern's great, full face turned a livid gray, and instinctively he swung, striking with all his might, yet, even as he struck, Mead was under and had grappled him about the waist. The youngest witness present never forgot. For an instant, the two big bodies swayed back and forth, rocking, reeling, striving for balance; then crashed to the floor together.

Over and over they writhed and twisted, pounding, kneeing, throttling, matching trick for trick and strength for strength, fighting only as lumbermen can fight when equal meets equal. Table and stove were piled in a ruined heap. Once a lantern fell and exploded. The half-breed threw a blanket over the flames; the fight went on. Twice McGovern pinned his man to the floor with [illegible] muscle-wracking holds that brought the white to young Mead's lips, and twice, just in the nick of time, young Mead slipped free.

They rose and broke apart. Now it was that Mead took the aggressive, forcing McGovern back to the bunk lines with fast, hard-hitting rushes. Red's breath was coming in short dry gasps and he held his head low, battling for time. Yet ever came the swift, relentless rushes, and ever he was driven backward, slowly, yielding foot by foot. And then, in a single unfortunate moment, his hand chanced to fall on a peevy haft, and the law of the woods was broken.

Sudden as the stroke was, Mead had side-stepped, closed in, and gripped McGovern by wrist and elbow. Then he smiled, a cold, calculating smile, and men who saw knew that McGovern's career was over. The struggle was short, desperately sure. Wrenching the hook loose, Mead drove its iron heel into the flooring, dropping the oaken haft back against his shoulder, and, with almost the same motion, catching McGovern about neck and knees, doubled him backward across it. Slowly he began to draw in, bending the other's back around the wooden bar. The bunkroom understood, and grew silent. Farther and farther he pressed, until the man's face grew black and a queer choking gurgle came from the purple lips. Big Steve, the boss, started forward to interfere, then checked himself. Still that steady, deliberate bending did not cease. Nothing could be heard save the dismal moan of the wind thru the hemlocks, the rattle of the snow at the window-pane, and the strained heavy breathing of the men as they listened with set faces for the sickening snap that would tell the end had come.

The noise of the storm grew suddenly louder, a rush of cold air swept thru the room, fanning the flames in the lantern globes. Mead raised his head. A girl stood in the doorway, blinking the snow from her eyelashes and vigorously rubbing the night from her eyes. She had come in haste and was tired, for she leaned heavily against her up-ended skis.

Slowly released, the limp, unconscious body of Red McGovern slipped sluggishly down the peevy haft to the floor. Horribly he lay there, his red, hairy face and bloodshot, distended eyes staring upward at the ceiling. The men closed in about him, screening him from the doorway.

The girl, her eyes grown accustomed to the light, made known her errand.

"I'm wanting Red McGovern," she said, addressing the group. "Is he here?"

There was no response. No one answered. No one moved. So swift had been the transition that they scarcely understood.

"I say I want Red McGovern and in a hurry, men. Is he here?"

She pushed back the black bear-skin hood from her forehead, and a mass of burnished hair poured tumbling out and down her shoulders. Her eyes flashed anxiously from man to man, conveying her request.

They shifted uneasily. Red McGovern lay at their backs. An awkward silence crept thru the bunkroom. They heard Big Steve clear his throat, and dared not look.

"Men, won't you tell me? Is he here?" she pleaded. "I've got to find him."

Big Steve stepped to the front. The silence, surcharged, grew more intense as they waited.

"Lady, I've to tell you that Red passed out just a minute ago," said Steve, speaking softly.

"Out? Where? Tell me." She grabbed Big Steve by the shirt and knotted both hands in its bosom. "Tell me, I say, for his wife is dying, and I've got to find out. I came forty miles thru the woods to get him. I'm his daughter Rose."

"His daughter?"

Equivocation died on the big boss' lips, leaving him dumb. His eyes gazed stolidly away over the young girl's head to the snow drifting in thru the half-closed door. He started to turn. Instinctively the men were drawing aside, making a lane for her to pass.

At its head lay the body of Red McGovern, and over the body stood young Mead. With a low cry the girl sprang toward them, gathering the man in her arms.

"Red! Red!" she urged, shaking him. "Wake up, don't you know me? I'm Rose, your daughter Rose, and mother's dying. Red, are you drunk? Oh, daddy, father, what shall I do?"

Suddenly she became quiet. The man had slumped awkwardly down across her knees. For a long time she looked, then slowly raised her eyes.

The men had fallen back to a respectful distance. Fearless in the face of danger, quick in decision when moments were freighted with life or death, they recoiled at the present emergency. The very pity of them broadened the gap between. They were helpless.

Mead alone stood near, remaining where the ebb of the others had left him. Over the girl's upturned face as she saw him passed horror, fear, anger, in quick succession. Her father's body fell unheeded to the floor. She leaped backward, forward.

"You!" she cried, "you, Tom Mead, you did it, you got him at last!"

He caught her by the shouders, stopping her onrush, and held her struggling at arm's length.

"Listen, Rose," he said, shaking her roughly, "your father's not dead, you came just in time to save him. I—I nearly forgot. Your mother—keep still, can't you—your mother's dying, you say? Then I've got to help you. Here, pull yourself together. We've got to work fast. What is it you want? You've got to trust me."

Gradually she was growing calmer.

"Rose, what is it you want?" He was speaking kindly now, and her eyes were big with a yielding hopelessness. She broke down.

"The medicine! Tom, for God's sake help me! It's another spell, and not a thing in the house. Dad promised he would send it out last week."

"He was drunk. Here, Rose," he continued, "help me on with these leggins. Now the scarf. It's cold on the river tonight. I can get dogs at Vatheck and make better time back.

"Men, you'd better get at Red; he isn't under yet. And Steve, you see that the girl gets home all right. Good-by."

"Tom."

He turned, his hand on the latch.

"We heard that two men from the Mounted came into the village last week. One of them is Petral. Can—can you get thru?"

He surveyed her curiously as she sat there on the edge of his bunk. "If it wasn't for the medicine I doubt you'd want me to. Yes, I can get thru." Stepping back down the line of bunks, he unslung a rifle from its peg above her head.

Two hours later, when Red McGovern groaned and feebly opened his eyes, Tom Mead, the man who had put him out, was shoeing swiftly southward thru the storm, a solitary figure upon the long lone stretch of the snow-bound river. Thus quickly does fate assume control of human events.

But young Mead's thoughts were not of Red McGovern. Two police from the Northwestern Mounted were waiting in the village, and one of them was Petral. He might pull in and out without being discovered—he had done it before—but the Mounted seldom let game slip thru its fingers, and if he were unlucky—well, the old lady would die. So would he—later.

Morning was half spent as he neared the first saloon of the river town. Bantering familiarly with the barkeep, he passed on. At the rector's he told his mission, and borrowed a team of dogs. There weren't many dog teams in Vatheck. The village was too far south save for those who, like the rector, had occasion to travel north.

Late as it was the town was but just awake. It was taking this opportunity to sleep. Two months hence the woods would open, winter-bound lumber crews would burst from their coverts, feverish insomnia would reign. As he drove up the straggling, snowdrifted street, Mead noted a Government sled drawn up before one of the "hotels." There was no "the" hotel in Vatheck. The lumberjacks, their patrons, were democratic, and woe betide aspiring plate glass when the drives came down.

A Bay Company's store still [illegible], mercantile relic of an epoch forced inevitably northward to a region measured by an ever-decreasing radius, of an age when Vatheck was little more than a trading post where, in the spring, lone trappers gathered to barter their winter's catch, and shy, unobtrusive Indians glided in and out of the big stockade. The saloon and the lumberjack had brought a change.

Mead stood leaning against the counter and facing the door. The clerk was winding the last cinch of twine about his purchase. A tall man paused outside and came up the steps. Save for the erect military swing of the shoulders there was nothing to distinguish him from other tall men. He was dressed after the fashion of the woods.

"Morning, Mead."

"Morning, Petral. Up on business?"

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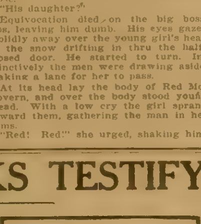

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"Yep, old business. After you, Tom—special trip."

"So. You don't say? Sorry to discommode you, but I can't go this time. Honest I can't. Old lady sick eighty miles up in the woods, and I got to get the dope to her. Play me fair, Petral. I knew you were here, but had to come."

"Did I ever fail to play any man fair, Mead?"

It was noticeable that each man kept his rifle swung well forward under his arm.

"No. That's why I'm asking you this."

"We've been after you two years—two years last month—and I can't take chances. You're a hard one to find."

The men were watching each other with apparent unconcern. The clerk had edged to one side.

"I've got to go."

"You can't."

"Can't! Hell!"

The last like a young explosive as Mead leaped from the counter to the center of the room, both guns simultaneously belching fire. Each man was shooting from the hip; the roar of the repeaters sounded like a small cannonade. Something smashed in the rear of the room, as by magic a long flapping rent was laid open in Mead's coat. A bullet caught him in the shoulder. He swore again. Petral went down in a heap, sidled to his elbow, and drew a quick aim from the shoulder. Mead clubbed down the leveled rifle, leaped the prostrate body, seized his package, and was gone.

A dog sledge was coming up the street on a run. Leaping to his own, he wheeled the dogs toward the river and raced for the shelter of the woods under a fusillade of shots.

The rector's dogs were famous in all the country round, but the sun, rising higher and warmer, had softened the snow until the sledding was wet and heavy. Time passed. Traveling in the lead, Mead was breaking path and making it easier going for the man somewhere behind.

Occasionally down a long, unwinding stretch of the river, he could see this man. At such times he cursed savagely, and the pain in his arm throbbed harder as he ran behind his sled. He thought of ambush, but the thought disgusted him; he traveled on. It grew darker and colder. Thirty miles he had made into the heart of the forest. His dogs were panting, heads hanging. Perhaps he would have to abandon them and strike off for himself. But time was life to the woman—and Rose. Crust began to form on the moist snow. The sled ran easier. A chill wind swept down the valley, quickening the jaded dogs.

After a time he became aware that the man behind was gaining. The moon came up and hung, a big, tawny disc, among the stars. The storm of the preceding night had passed. The Northern woods were motionless and still, alight with interminable miles of whiteness. Feathery snow fell from the branches as he brushed by. Secluded and safe he seemed with the big gray trees for company, but somewhere, not far behind, over this same white expanse trailed the law. The law had had the advantage all day. His dogs were nearly spent, their feet bleeding, cut by the sharp crusts of snow as they now and again broke thru. It was not endurance now, but speed—the law was closing in. Should he run, or turn and fight? Mounting a slight rise he paused to look back. The law was coming up the valley at a trot. To take to the woods meant delay, to fight——

Suddenly his pulses bounded. He had heard a shout and the yelp of dogs. Another sledge appeared behind him, on the ridge above the valley. Etched sharply against the treetops and the bright moonlit heaven was the big, burly figure of Red McGovern.

"Hi, yi!" yelled Red.

The law unslung its rifle.

A puff of smoke came from the ridge. The valley answered. Both teams had increased their speed. Mead whirled his own team back. The others were coming on at a breakneck pace, [illegible] they ran. The law, headed off in front, stopped and turned its attention to the man on the ridge. The man on the ridge swung his dogs straight down the slope at the law, throwing lead at every jump. Mead lashed his dogs in fury. Red was reckless. Could he get there in time to save him?

The law rested on one knee, patiently waiting, one eye on Red, one on Mead. Its rifle cracked. Red's lead dog went down. Dogs and sled were piled in a heap. Red pitched on down the embankment. He rose, covered with snow, and began shooting again. The law suddenly straightened up, reeled half about, grabbed its head with both hands, and fell. The snow turned crimson. Red stopped to reload. The law writhed to a side position, drawing up its rifle. Mead swore and began to shoot. He saw Red pitch forward onto his face. The law had got him.

Early the following afternoon Mead approached the McGovern cabin on the river bank. Rose, meeting him at the door, gazed mutely at the muffled burden which he lifted from the sled and bore into the house. Her grief had passed visible signs of sorrow.

Four days later Red died. Her mother lived.

And it was her mother who told the girl of young Mead's life, of how Red had fought and killed Mead's father in a timber fight, of how the law had placed the guilt on old Mead's son, of how Red, unconfessing, had protected him, of young Mead's hatred and vow of vengeance, of how love alone had intervened.

When she had done the girl, stealing out of the room, knelt quietly by the side of the man who was k[illegible] by her father's body.

* * *

UNDER SUSPICION.

Pilkins ran lightly up the steps. "Is Mr Higgins at home?" he asked the maid who opened the door.

"No, sir," said the maid.

"Then I'll wait for him," Pilkins assured her, stepping inside. "I have a business engagement with him—he asked me to meet him here on my way home."

Pilkins, when left alone, looked around the library with considerable satisfaction. He liked having dealings with a man who could afford a library like that. Thereupon he drew out paper and pencil and began to figure. When he had covered two sheets he fell to wondering why Higgins was so late. Pilkins had prided himself on being prompt, and it annoyed him that Higgins was not there to appreciate his promptness.

He picked up a heavy carved silver paper weight to examine it. Then he yawned.

A maid passed thru the hall just then and Pilkins called her. "I'd like to telephone," he said. She looked doubtful.

"The phone," she told him then, "is upstairs. You can come up."

Pilkins followed the maid upstairs and was left, slightly bewildered, before a writing desk in an elaborately furnished boudoir.

"Gee!" breathed Pilkins, as he gingerly pushed an inlaid blotter out of his way and reached for the phone. It was his intention to tell his mother that he would be late to dinner.

As he opened his mouth to call his number Pilkins heard behind him distinctly and provocatively, "Ahem!"

Turning, he beheld a perfectly garbed young woman, who surveyed him with eyebrows raised questioningly. Pilkins suddenly felt extremely uncomfortable. In those delicately raised eyebrows he saw innumerable questions, chief of which was what he, an utterly unknown man, was doing at a desk that did not in the remotest degree concern him. Perhaps it was her desk—and he had heard of quite innocent persons being taken for thieves!

While he still gasped miserably the vision spoke. "I beg pardon," she said, with suspicious politeness, "but I'm Mrs Higgins' [illegible] and I want to phone. But [illegible] seem to be using——"

"Not at all!" Pilkins got out hurriedly, rising so abruptly that he tipped over the ink. "I was thru—that is, I hadn't begun—I'm not going to use it, I assure you."

He bolted from the room with his ears tingling. Those eyebrows told him plainly what their owner thought of him. The hall was big and had unexpected nooks and passages from it, and Pilkins bumped into walls seeking an exit, much as a moth batters against a lamp chimney down which it has [illegible].

There was a quick rush from an open door which he had passed, and Pilkins was grasped by an eager hand.

"Oh, you've come at last!" cried a quick voice. "Well, it's about time. I phoned two hours ago, and I can't do a single thing with that machine till it's fixed!"

Propelled by the hand, which belonged to a brisk young woman who might have been a governess or a general in the army, Pilkins found himself blinking before a sewing machine that billowed with white. "I'll write some letters while you fix the tension," announced his captor, and vanished forthwith.

"Prunes!" said Pilkins, violently, and sat down and wiped his forehead. Then he squared his shoulders and went away from there. He was going to get out of the house if he had to jump from a window.

On the landing he met again Mrs Higgins' cousin. Her face was flushed and she barred his way. At the foot of the stairs appeared a man. There was menace in Mrs Higgins' cousin's eye.

"I'm here," Pilkins explained desperately to her, "on a business appointment with Mr. Higgins. I——"

"Well," said the cousin, triumphantly introducing the approaching man with a dramatic wave of the hand, "here is Mr Higgins!"

What she evidently expected happened. Pilkins and Higgins stared at each other, indignantly, unknowingly.

"I told you so!" cried the cousin. "I caught him just in time! He doesn't know you from Adam!"

"I don't want to!" said Pilkins, with the rudeness of utter despair. "I want Arthur V. Higgins."

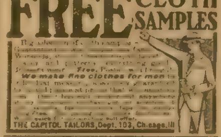
"Wh-wh-why," stammered the cousin, "that's my father! We live two doors down! Oh, my goodness! Have I made a mistake?"

"The wrong house!" cried Pilkins. Then he collected himself and looked the pretty cousin in the eye. "And now," he said, "kindly lead me to the right Mr Higgins."

* * *

Like Moses.

Winston Spencer Churchill, formerly British first lord of the admiralty, made a little talk at a dinner of literary men some years ago, when he was known to fame as only a young author. He began by saying: "I, like Moses, am the author of five books, but I will not pursue the parallel further."



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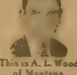

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He was a particularly dirty-looking specimen, but he had told the tale with the pathos of an expert. The youthful housemistress felt touched, but determined to follow her mother's precepts.

"Now, my man," she said when he had finished, "I will give you something to eat if you will take that chopper——"

"Oh, mum, I sha'n't need it," the tramp assured her. "My teeth are all right."

Poor Pedestrian.

The panicky pedestrian hesitated at the intersection of two busy streets. A motor car was rushing upon him from one direction; from another point a motorcycle was approaching rapidly; an auto truck was coming from behind, and a taxicab was speedily bearing down upon him. He gave a hopeless glance upward. Directly above him a runaway aeroplane was in a very rapid descent.

There remained for him but one resource. He was standing upon a manhole cover. Quickly seizing it, he lifted the lid, jumped into the hole—and was run over by a subway train.

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

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The Castaway Boys

Or, LOST ON A RAFT

By St. George Rathborne

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Begun in No. 10, March 10. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MYSTERIOUS FOOTPRINTS

NOW, so far as that went, Andy himself had as yet come to no definite conclusion in the matter. Various theories had of course flashed thru his active mind, just as they also appealed to Specs, but so far he had not settled on any one thing.

"Better still, Specs," he remarked, "now that we're thru our breakfast I'll take you to see the footprint. How does that strike you?"

"All right, Andy, let's be going then," the other hastily replied.

A short time afterward and they were following the shore line. As Specs might have anticipated, had he given the matter a moment's thought, this took them up the eastern side of the island; for it had been in that quarter Andy confined his labor when looking for something that would form the substance of their first meal.

The great river swept past with an angry roar, telling of the flood waters that were causing it to rise continually, an inch an hour it might be. Specs looked eagerly off toward the far-away mainland. To his eyes that shore seemed miles distant, with all that flowing water between, and no boat handy with which to cover the existing gap.

"Here you are!" said Andy, softly, and Specs noticed that he kept one eye continually roving about, just as if he [illegible] expected that some ferocious wild beast might suddenly break out from among the trees and attack them; or perhaps a band of savages appear with weird whoops, and make them prisoners; for in spite of his common sense Specs could not get the tale of Robinson Crusoe out of his mind, and he kept constantly comparing their conditions with those surrounding the marooned sailor.

Usually Specs would have bothered his head very little over just the imprint of a shoe in the sand; but the conditions were such just then that even so simple a thing assumed gigantic proportions. And so he stared very hard at the impression.

"It doesn't seem to be very big, Andy," was his practical comment.

"Now that was what struck me the first thing, Specs," the other hastened to say; "and so I concluded that if this track was made by a man he must be undersized; either that, or else a boy made it."

"Let's call that settled then, Andy; and now when would you say he passed along this way? You've always been something of a woodsman, and ought to be able to tell."

"Why, I should think it might have been just about the break of day," Andy explained. "One thing certain, he came after the rain stopped, for it was heavy enough to wash out the footprints, and you can see yourself, Specs, they're clean-cut and perfect."

"That's sound logic, I should say," admitted the other boy. "Then he must have been along here just about the time we were beginning to stir around, and thinking of getting our fire started. Queer that he didn't discover our being on the island."

"If he did there's no sign of his rushing away; and he never bothered stealing closer to spy on us, that I can see," and Andy again followed the tracks for several paces. "I reckon the wind blowing thru the scrubby trees and the waves slapping up against the shore combined to make enough noise to prevent him from hearing us talking up at the point where the rocks sheltered us. So he came this far, and went away [illegible]."

Specs laid a hand on his chum's arm. "Andy, could you follow such a trail as that, do you think?" he asked eagerly.

"Why, it would be like taking candy from the baby," chuckled the other. "I really believe I could do it with one eye shut, the marks are so plain. I see what you've got in your mind, Specs; you think we ought to find out who this party is, and if he's got any sort of boat that might be used to carry us to the mainland?"

"Yes, that's what I had in my head, Andy; how about it?"

"It isn't a bad idea; but you wouldn't want to stay there alone by the fire, I expect?" remarked Andy.

"Oh, no! I'd want to go along with you," came the hasty answer. "We could fix our fire so it'd hold good for some hours, couldn't we?"

"Nothing easier. And since we've got the notion in our heads, let's go back right now and arrange things. I'm some curious about this chap myself."

Just as Andy had said, it took very little time and trouble to arrange matters at the camp, so that the fire would keep going for quite a long stretch. A couple of logs were so adjusted that they would continue to burn nicely, and not vanish in the maw of the flame under two hours at the least.

Satisfied with this part of their work, the two boys now prepared to start forth on their errand. Unlike the great Robinson they could not load themselves down with a variety of firearms when venturing to find out the origin of the strange footprints upon the sands of the island upon which they had been cast by the storm.

As the best they could do under the circumstances each armed himself with a stout cudgel; and it is amazing how much confidence the possession of even such a crude weapon of defense gives one on occasion. Andy in particular whipped his ugly-looking stick around with a vigor that spoke volumes; and woe to the wight unfortunate enough to have that staff brought down upon his pate with all the strength of Andy's stout arm.

"Now we're ready," suggested the leader; "let's hit the trail."

"No danger of our getting lost, anyway," remarked Specs, fishing for a reassuring answer.

"Well, hardly," chuckled his mate. "This island runs up and down the river, and no matter how we go we can always tell which is east, and which is west. Our fire lies at the upper point, remember, and if at any time we should get separated, just keep that in mind, Specs, so we can come together again."

"Oh! I'll see to it that we don't get separated," said the shorter one of the pair, with a positive conviction in his tones that spoke volumes.

Arriving at the spot where the first footprint could be seen, Andy immediately took upon his shoulders the task of following the trail. Just as he had assured his companion, it was so easy the veriest novice in woodcraft could have kept in line without the least trouble. Specs busied himself in keeping one eye on what Andy was doing, and at the same time looking ahead for any signs of smoke, or other indications that would denote the presence of human beings. From the anxious expression upon his face one might be inclined to believe the boy half anticipated making a grewsome discovery such as once staggered Robinson Crusoe, when he saw those savages dancing madly around the fire where a human being was about to be sacrificed.

Specs had made one great and pleasing discovery since morning broke. As might have been expected, he had lost his spectacles during the first of their great adventure, when they were being buffeted about on the raft. During the night the loss had not bothered him in the least, and now it seemed as tho he could see even better than when wearing the glasses. In fact, he had told Andy he believed the time had actually come for him to discard such useless things, and that his eyes were as strong as those of any other fellow. So that it seemed as tho the dawn that had broken so gloomily had at least brought one piece of good luck to Specs Whittaker.

As he looked around him now, even across the wide water separating them from the mainland, he was more than ever convinced of this truth; and it gave him considerable satisfaction.

"It seems that sometimes even a calamity can bring blessings along with it, Andy," he was telling his chum in a whisper; "only for my losing those old specs like I did last night, when hanging onto the raft, I might have kept wearing the same, goodness knows how long."

Andy raised a warning finger as if to tell Specs this was hardly the time to indulge in such reflections. All such would keep until they had solved the mystery of the footprints, and learned who and what this stranger might be, sharing their island home.

Presently the trail left the sand shore, and the two boys found themselves starting in among the scrubby trees with which the river island seemed to be for the most part covered. Here it might be somewhat more difficult for Andy to follow the footprints. Specs hoped he would not find it necessary to throw up the job, for by this time he felt a deep interest in the result. Perhaps he had already commenced to weave some sort of pleasing fancy that would turn out to their advantage once they made the acquaintance of the Unknown.

They had been walking for some [illegible] teen minutes since leaving th[illegible] and Andy was of the opinion that [illegible] must be drawing near the lower end the [illegible] thus far it was [illegible] him in deciding [illegible] for they had not been able to make positively sure of the fact.

Suddenly the two trailers stopped, and looked at each other as tho a sound had re[illegible]

"An ax, as sure as anything, w[illegible] it, Andy?" asked Specs, in fresh excitement.

"Nothing more nor less; and there it goes again!" admitted the other. "Somebody is chopping firewood. That means there's a fire close by, and we can [illegible] a guess it's some kind of camp [illegible] notice we're sort of [illegible] that the wind is almost in [illegible] which accounts for our [illegible] sound."

"But it was so [illegible] is using that ax can[illegible] do you think, Andy?"

"[illegible] lose by; but come along, and we'll soon know the truth, Specs."

They continued to steal forward. Andy kept an eye on the tracks so plainly seen in the soft earth. As for Specs, he was straining his vision in hopes of making a pleasing discovery at any moment now.

Then once again they paused. It was not any sound that compelled this first halt, but both boys started to sniffing the air, like war horses that scent battle smoke.

"Oh, Andy! Do you get that delicious smell? I do believe it's real Java coffee! It goes right to my head and makes me feel dizzy," whispered Specs, holding fast to his companion's arm as tho in truth he did have a sensation of toppling over from ecstatic delight.

"And bacon, don't you understand?" echoed Andy, again and again drawing in huge draughts of the aroma that impregnated the surrounding atmosphere, for they had by this time come fully in the lee of some unseen camp fire, where breakfast was possibly in process of preparation.

The effect of this combination upon the poor castaways might have been deemed ludicrous had it not also bordered on the pathetic. They had eaten a breakfast, it is true, and fairly satisfied the demands of their appetites, but not such a breakfast as they were in the habit of devouring, so that possibly their extravagant gestures could [illegible] forgiven.

But of course it was foolish to hang back any longer. Specs believed he would be willing to accept almost any risk, with the tantalizing aroma tempting him. And so they once more commenced to advance.

Shortly afterward they began to catch glimpses of the fire, tho really the first thing they saw was a brown-looking tent made of some waterproof material calculated to shed the hardest downpour. Then they discovered a couple of gay blankets strung on a clothesline that stretched from one tree to another, together with a vast array of garments, varying from a colored sweater, such as is worn by college football boys, to a suit of khaki that a hunter might use in stalking his game.

Andy had no sooner discovered this wonderful display than he made up his mind to several things. In the first place, the camper was a boy, possibly of about his own age. Then he must also belong to a well-to-do family, because everything in sight pointed to the possession of an abundance of money. And last of all, he must be inclined to be fond of outdoor sports, or he would not own such a complete outfit.

CHAPTER VIII

ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME

"THERE he is coming out of the tent," whispered Specs, softly.

"Don't make a move, yet," cautioned the other; and so they crouched there like a couple of stone figures, watching the occupant of the camp. Andy saw at once that he had guessed exactly right when he figured on the lone camper being a

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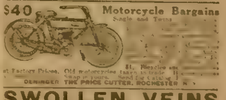
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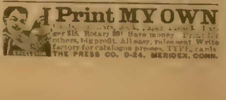
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boy of about his own age. He was taller than Andy, tho not nearly so compactly built. There was a sort of quick and nervous movement about everything he did that spoke of a high-strung and imperious disposition. Andy also noticed that the other frowned a good deal, and seemed to shake his head, as tho his thoughts could not be making him wholly contented or happy. He scented a mystery immediately; it was all so strange, their finding this young chap camping on a desolate island right in the middle of the great river, and apparently quite alone, tho surrounded by all the comforts that money could purchase, so far as a complete camping outfit went.

How Andy's eyes enviously took in the aluminum cooking utensils, and the expensive mess chest that was built to hold dozens of commodities such as are needed by an outing party when a team or a boat is used to convey them into camp.' If the wonderful stranger lacked any possible luxury calculated to make a stay in camp a delight and a joy forever, then Andy could never have guessed what it was.

Why, there was even a beautifully built shotgun standing up against the trunk of a scrubby oak tree; and a costly fishing-rod could be also seen close by. Andy had to rub his eyes several times under a half-conviction that all this might be a dream, for never had he imagined that any boy could be the possessor of such a wonderful outfit for woods life.

And yet the owner did not seem to appreciate his good fortune. Indeed, that gloomy look on his young face kept Andy guessing as to its cause. As the other moved about the camp he now and then indulged in a laugh that really made the blood of the listeners run cold, it was so lacking in mirth. Never before had such a contrast come before the eyes of Andy Purdue: a boy upon whom the gods had delighted to smile, and shower their best gifts; and yet he apparently the most unhappy of mortals. What could it all mean, Andy asked himself; and he straightway resolved, boy fashion, that he would know before he was a great deal older.

As they watched him, he took the coffeepot from beside the fire, helped himself to a rasher of the bacon, with some fried potatoes in the bargain, and sat down cross-legged on a blanket he had [illegible] on the ground, to partake of his breakfast.

From the way he ate it was apparent that he did not possess the ravenous appetite that both the watchers were gifted with. Indeed, he sipped at that coffee [illegible] ambrosia for the gods, Specs [illegible], as tho it tasted bitter to him; and [illegible] way he attacked the contents of his aluminum plate it [illegible] tho he did not care much [illegible]thing or not.

And suddenly, as the two boys continued to gape and wonder, they saw his face transformed. The sour look gave way to one bordering on deep emotion; and they saw him again shaking his head stubbornly, even while wiping his eyes with a snowy handkerchief. More than ever was Andy puzzled to account for these strange things.

"Don't you think, Andy," faintly whispered Specs, with his lips close to the ear of his companion, "that perhaps he's done something he's sorry for?"

Now that was just what Andy had concluded himself as the only reasonable explanation of the affair. Every indication pointed to such a solution of the puzzle. The boy had something weighing on his mind; and despite the fact of possessing all those astonishing things calculated to make any fellow happy, he showed signs of being almost miserable.

They crouched there and continued to watch. Andy had of course decided to break in upon the other, but thought it might be best to wait until the boy had finished his breakfast. There may be such a thing as courtesy, even in the woods, or when cast away upon a river island. When finally they saw him get on his feet and commence to gather his cooking traps together, as tho about to clean up, Andy gave the arm of his chum a pull.

"Come on, we'll introduce ourselves, Specs," he said softly.

Then, as they continued to advance, he purposely coughed aloud, so as to let the other know of their presence near by. The result was certainly surprising, and to timid Specs rather disconcerting; for the boy in the camp, turning his head and discovering two figures advancing toward him, with clubs in their hands, made a hasty jump over to where his beautiful double-barrel shotgun stood, and snatching this up, he faced them with a look of defiance.

"Better keep away. I give you fair warning!" he shrilled angrily. "If you've come after me I tell you I won't go back; and you'll be sorry if you try to force me against my will."

Of course the two boys had come to a standstill when they found him pointing that gun in their direction. Andy did not think it good policy to take chances, particularly with so excitable a fellow as this chap seemed to be, and one who had some good reason for not wishing company alongside his fire.

"Hold up, there, please," Andy called out, in his usual pleasant manner. "We certainly don't mean you any harm. Why, we couldn't do anything if we wanted to, for besides a pocketknife we haven't the ghost of a weapon with us. You see, we were caught in a flood up the Maurice River, [illegible] raft, and carried out onto the Mississippi. Last night our raft was flung on the upper part of this island. You can see it there still, if you want to look. We managed to make a break[illegible] I gathered and which we cooked in an old cracked iron pot. Then discovering footprints in the sand, which we knew must have been made since the rain stopped, we have followed the trail down here. And we hope you will believe us when we [illegible] that we'd like to be friends with [illegible]"

The boy stared hard at them both. He would have been a foolish fellow indeed if he could not see that Andy's face was the epitome of frankness and honesty, while Specs certainly did not look like a cunning or evil fellow. Gradually the scowl passed from the handsome face of the camper. Such was the sense of relief that swept over him upon finding his suspicions groundless that even a very faint smile began to take its place; and Andy thought, after all, he was not such a savage-looking fellow. Remembering those tears he had seen wiped away from the cheeks of the other, he also decided that it must be the camper had more than half repented of something he had done that was wrong.

"Well, that's mighty interesting, I must say!" the boy now went on to exclaim, as he once more placed the gun alongside the tree and advanced part way toward the newcomers. "Then you're just in time to share my poor breakfast, such as it is. I can add more coffee to the pot, and it'll only take a short while for another supply of bacon to fry brown over such a fire. I'm glad you've come, indeed I am."

He looked as tho he really meant every word. That gloomy expression had left his face entirely now, and the grip he gave each of the boys seemed genuine.

So Andy immediately introduced himself and his chum, and gave further details of how they happened to be carried away in the flood, when it bore down upon the town of Guilford on the little Maurice River, after the dam up at the paper mills had given way.

Of course this was as good as an invitation for the occupant of the island camp to reciprocate. He turned more or less red with confusion and looked uneasy, finally breaking forth with:

"My name is Julius Westbrook. Where I live isn't a matter of much importance just now, because my home is where I hang my hat, and this camp may stand for such a place. I've been out here on this island for nearly two weeks now, tho I guess it's seemed like two years to some folks; I know it has to me. And how much longer I may stay depends on a whole lot of things."

That was all the explanation he offered to make, nor could Andy venture to ask further questions, when the span of their acquaintance was so short. Perhaps a little later on, when Julius came to know them better, he might see fit to be more communicative. Meanwhile they must take it out in guessing; and indeed the mystery was quite enough to baffle the best hand at finding solutions to puzzles.

Specs looked a whole lot happier than he had been since they landed on their island. In the first place, they were no longer alone. Then the fact that he was to be regaled on that lovely coffee, and treated to a good helping of crisp bacon, not to mention crackers and marmalade and such good things which he saw scattered about on some clean boards which, laid flat on the ground, served the camper as his crude table—surely such a royal feast in prospect was enough to make his spirits rise. Last of all, he began to indulge in a hope that possibly their coming upon Julius might in some way accelerate their own escape from the island; tho of course Specs could not even guess how this was to come about, for he did not claim to have any special gift at seeing thru things or walls.

The boy continued to ask many questions as he prepared further supplies of the breakfast. Plainly he did not hesitate to pry into the affairs of his new-found acquaintances; but then the [illegible] was different, because Andy and Specs had nothing to conceal; and they showed a willingness to lift the curtain of their past as far as any one could wish, so that every act of their lives could be seen. That is what follows having a clean conscience. Perhaps Julius Westbrook could not claim such a splendid privilege, since he made no further effort to tell anything concerning himself.

Andy kept on using his eyes to advantage. Never had he imagined any one fellow could be the possessor of so many fine things in the line of camping comforts. Why, if Julius had ransacked a complete sporting goods catalog, and [illegible] it after everything suggested as being apt to make an outing in the woods a delight, he could not possibly own a greater assortment. And every article [illegible] of the best manufacture in the bargain.

Now, while Andy was one of those matter-of-fact fellows who can have a jolly enough time with a meager assortment of stuff, still he knew how some of those same fancy articles may add to the pleasure, on a trip of this sort. When the weather is wet and cold, and no wood fit to burn can be found, how nice it is to be able to warm up a tin of soup, for instance, by simply piercing the outer shell of the double can, and allowing some cold water to start the unslacked lime that lies between the two shells to starting a furious heat, by means of which the contents of the tin will be quickly made so hot one can hardly touch it with the lips. You see, Andy, too, had read those alluring catalogs from cover to cover, so that at least he was posted on what recent inventions had been brought to the front, calculated to coax money from the pockets of those who could well afford to pay for special privileges.

By and by, when the bacon was pronounced done and the new supply of coffee had boiled sufficiently, Julius took pleasure in waiting on his two unexpected guests. Indeed, he was showing signs of considerable satisfaction over their coming. Whatever may have been the real cause for his lonely stay on the island, Andy felt already convinced that he was glad to have them join him; that it took his mind off some unpleasant subject he had been brooding over all the while, until he was fast making himself half sick with the worry.

When the two boys had eaten their fill, and thanked Julius many times for the pleasure he was giving them, things were working in such a fashion that they even felt as tho they had known one another a long time. It does not take boys a great while to become friendly; for there is always a kind of freemasonry among them that works miracles that way.

"I hope you'll excuse me for giving you such a harsh welcome," said Julius, as he turned to look over his shoulder while heading for the tent; "but to tell you the honest truth, I thought at first one of you might be—er, the sheriff, you see; and I had my reasons for not wanting to meet him just now!"

CHAPTER IX.

A BOY WITH A SECRET.

SPECS was leaning forward, and as the form of Julius vanished inside the wonderful khaki-colored waterproofed tent, he managed to whisper:

"Did you hear what he said, Andy? He thought the sheriff had come after him; and that makes it look pretty bad now, doesn't it? I wonder what terrible thing he can have done?"

"Just hold your horses, Specs, and don't jump at conclusions so fast," the other told him. "A little later on I imagine he'll open up and tell us something that he's got on his mind. You see he's been here all alone for two long weeks, and was getting fairly wild to talk with some one. Just have patience, and leave it to me."

"Of course I will, Andy; and I'm sure you can manage things." With this satisfied remark Specs resumed an upright position, just as Julius came out of the tent again.

The boy glanced suspiciously toward them, as tho he wondered whether they might not have been saying something about him; but Andy exhibited such a genuine interest in the expensive camera hanging from the limb of a tree, having been placed where the sun might dry the moisture that had accumulated on the leather case, that presently they were exchanging comments along the line of pictures by flashlight, and all that sort of thing so interesting to the amateur photographer.

"I've got some pictures in my album which I'm sure you'd like to see," remarked Julius, presently; "the one I have with me contains only outdoor scenes that I've taken. When you notice what a range they cover you'll understand that I've traveled considerably."

So he went in again to get the album, which turned out to be one of the rough-and-ready type best suited for knocking around in a camp, or when traveling. Even Specs was deeply interested now, for he had always been exceedingly fond of dreaming of doing considerable travel himself, when he grew older, and the favorable opportunity arrived. Hence he could envy one upon whom Fortune smiled, so as to admit of his seeing many of the wonders of our own glorious land.

They sat there on that log, with the fire dying down near by, and any one looking in upon the scene just then would have said they were good chums; for Andy had, perhaps unconsciously, thrown an arm across the shoulders of Julius, and the latter allowed it to stay there; in fact, he acted as tho its presence gave him undiluted joy—he must have been so unhappy, so lonesome, so miserable during those two long weeks of his stay on the island.

Indeed, the pictures proved to be a very fine collection. When they heard Julius say that he had taken every one himself, Andy understood that the boy was considerable of an artist; also, the fact was very patent that he had an expensive lens in that postcard-size camera, for it cut beautifully, and all the detail work was wonderfully well done.

There were pictures of the West, the wonderful canyon of the Colorado, of Yellowstone Park, and the Canadian

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Pacific Railway, with its magnificent mountain peaks, and lakes of the clouds; of Niagara Falls, and the Whirlpool Rapids; of Canadian snowshoe tramps, and skating carnivals; of boating on the salt water, and the Great Lakes around Mackinac and the Snow Islands; yes, and of several camps where apparently Julius had had guides to look after his comfort, such as were certainly not manifest on the present occasion.

All these things made Andy wonder more than ever what caused the boy to hide himself away, as he was now undoubtedly doing. Something quite out of the general run must have happened. Specs might suspect a robbery, or something of that character, due to that anxiety exhibited by the boy when he spoke of anticipating a visit from the sheriff, whom he did not wish to see; but Andy could look deeper into things, and he had already commenced to build up a theory of his own.

And so it came about that when he had finished looking at all the pictures pasted in the album, and was about to hand it back, he caught a glimpse of one toward the end that seemed to have slipped in between the blank leaves. As he took it up he saw that it was the picture of a middle-aged man who stood smiling as he held up a fair-sized fish—evidently the spoils of his morning's labors.

"He looks happy!" remarked Andy, purposely, for he had noticed that the boy gave a violent start, and seemed to lose his color suddenly; while his hand, when he put it out to take the album and the picture from Andy, trembled visibly.

"I didn't know that was in there," he hastened to say, just as tho that might have been a terrible thing; and then adding: "It's er—some one I know, that's all. We were in camp up in Michigan, on the St. Mary's River, and, well, he wasn't much of a hand at fishing, so when he caught that bouncer I had to snap it off to show moth—that is, he wanted me to take it for him, and I did. But while you're here I'd like to have you take a picture of me and my camp. Some day, perhaps, I might want to see how it looked, you know, tho I fairly hate it right now; and once things like this are gone the can never be resurrected again, never."

Andy had found his clew, and he believed he could begin to see how thi[illegible] stood. That mention of the sheriff still puzzled him, but perhaps it might be explained easily enough, once he knew the facts of the matter.

He looked at Julius in a different way now. Indeed, come to examine his face a little closer, it really was not at all vicious. Pride had a firm grip there, yes, and possibly a haughty nature that did not like to be brooked. Julius had been born with a disposition that made him want to have his own way, as well as inheriting more of this world's goods than was for his best interests. And it may have been this imperious nature that had brought about all his trouble. Andy felt sure that gentleman whose picture he had discovered in the back of the album must be some close relative of the boy who sat there talking as fast as his tongue could rattle, as if he wanted to forget things that were unpleasant.

"Perhaps he may even be his father, or at least an uncle, because there's a certain resemblance that gives notice they both came from the same stock," was what Andy was telling himself, sagaciously. "And unless I miss my guess it was the word 'mother' he started to say when his voice broke down, and he hastened to turn it off with another remark. Well, if he's got a mother, I'm sure he's stood this hiding-out business longer than most fellows could have done. And I guess he's pretty nearly ready to give in, and go back where he belongs."

Having thus decided how matters stood, Andy played the game for all it was worth. Purposely, whenever he had a chance he turned the conversation toward his own home, and incidentally told of numerous little events that had happened there from time to time, all connected in some way with his mother's affection. Specs, who could not see thru the meaning of all this talk, wondered whether Andy could be near the breaking-down point; and when no one observed him Specs, on his part, turned away his head in order to wink violently, for his eyes were swimming.

"Speaking of taking a picture of your camp," said Andy, finally, when he thought he had rubbed it in quite sufficiently, "I don't think you could beat the view it affords right now, with all your stuff hung on the line. The sun, too, is just right for a fine picture. Suppose you let me snap a couple off while we have the chance?"

"That pleases me all right," agreed Julius, promptly. "You know how to manage a kodak, of course, and this is no different from the regular sort, even if I did have an extra lens put in it so as to get the finest of results."

"I've taken lots of pictures with one just like it," declared Andy, confidently.

"And some crackerjack ones in the bargain, let me tell you!" added Specs, in duty bound to back his chum up to the limit.

"Then you two must pose for me to get a snapshot of you," continued [illegible]lius; "for I'm sure I'll often look back to meeting such fine fellows with a lot of pleasure."

"Besides," added Andy, purposely, "I want to take the picture this morning, because we may not be here with you another day. We are wild to get back home and relieve the terrible feeling of suspense that we know must be racking our mothers' hearts. I tell you it is a dreadful thing for a mother not to know whether her boy is alive or dead, and that's what worries us most of all."

Well, the shot went home, for Andy certainly heard something like [illegible] close beside him, and when he lo[illegible] up Julius was very white; he also seemed to be swallowing a lump th[illegible] had apparently come near choki[illegible] tho he immediately passed it [illegible] hoarse laugh, saying

"I sometimes have one of those [illegible] little choking spells; you see, wh[illegible] was a youngster I was subject to [illegible] and they say that sometimes hang [illegible] a boy till he's grown to be a [illegible] I'll fix things a little so [illegible] kind of picture I want. W[illegible] of pulling out and leaving me. [illegible] you make me feel blue as indigo again I don't see however I can stand it being alone any longer"

Andy would have [illegible] then and there, and a[illegible] why he should insist [illegible] self in the [illegible] prevented him from taking such a bold course. Besides, Andy had faith to believe the thing might be managed by going slowly, and not ruining everything by being too premature

Accordingly, he took the camera [illegible] when everything was properly arrang[illegible] with Julius sitting there as if in the act of cooking his camp dinner, he pressed the trigger and the thing [illegible]

"Just repeat that, please, Andy," remarked the camper. "I always make it a point to duplicate every important picture that can never be taken by me again. Then if one turns out to be [illegible] And besides, it [illegible] the two."

Al[illegible] very nice, Andy thought, but ordinary boys who have too much use for their spare dimes to buy a double number of films can hardly be expected to follow such an expensive scheme, even tho its good points may be admitted His way was always to make sure of the one exposure.

In turn, then, Julius posed his two new friends, and took their pictures.

"You must promise to send us one of each view when you get the film developed and some prints made," urged Specs, eagerly and innocently.

"I certainly agree," replied the other, and then with a long-drawn sigh, which seemed to come involuntarily from the bottom of his heart, he added: "But just when that will be I can't say now, for my movements are rather uncertain. I may stay here a long time yet; and then again, a sudden notion might seize me to pull up stakes and quit when you go away."

He was near breaking d[illegible]n again, Andy thought, for he saw [illegible]ow Julius hurried off with his camera, as tho it might be of vital import[illegible]e to have the same placed securely inside the tent; but Andy knew that some other reason influenced that hasty retreat and the thought gave him reason to chuckle mysteriously to himself, much to the wonder of Specs, who nudged him with his elbow and whispered

"Now I know very well [illegible] to something or other that you [illegible] chosen to tell me about, Andy, and it's mean of you to keep me guessing so hard. Don't you intend that I shall know about the same? What have you found out? Please tell me"

"Not just yet, Specs, because, you see, I'm only guessing so far. If you keep quiet, and watch and listen, perhaps you'll hear and see certain things that'll put you wise. That's as far as I can explain, for here he comes out again with something more to show us."

All the same Andy looked as tho he felt he had a good grasp on the answer to the puzzling question that had in the beginning so worried him—which covered the cause of Julius Westbrook camping all by himself on that lonely island.

This remarkable story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Being a Beauty.

"Arabella is going to be a very pretty girl," remarked the citizen with the raincoat to his friend, who had stowed his umbrella in the rack above their heads.

"Well, yes," answered the citizen who had stowed his umbrella doubtfully. "But you see, we haven't decided yet whether we will have her go in for intellect or beauty. Beauty is appreciated more, but is harder to attain"

"Why, all the magazines tell a woman how to be beautiful, but you have to go to college for intellect, don't you"

"Well, there are a lot of beauty hints around, but they are not as easy to follow as a college course. They are a lot harder and more of a strain. With intellect and art and such things you can make a b[illegible]" and no one will know the differen[illegible] You can take up a stupid lot of studi[illegible] [illegible]d who is going to take the trouble to find out exactly how you progressed with them?

"But with beauty you are compelled to deliver the goods.

"A girl can go to college or t[illegible] respondence course for a few [illegible] learn about a lot of dead one[illegible] [illegible] is graduated. But a girl who goes in for beauty has to work vigorously at it and [illegible]

"A pretty girl has to wear gloves to peel onions, she can't expose her complexion to sun and wind, she has to rub dope on her [illegible] and eat certain thin[illegible] and the care of her hair takes up [illegible] much time each day that she could learn to play the piano if she devoted an equal [illegible]ber of hours to it, or she could learn [illegible] language or something. When a girl [illegible] a language she has it and when [illegible] a knowledge of music she has [illegible] [illegible]uty unless she has the rig[illegible] gown and hat and even the righ[illegible] of weather—bingo! The beauty [illegible]

[illegible] she washed her face [illegible]thed in olive oil and [illegible] the dark of the moon [illegible] fan.

[illegible] occasion her trunks failed to arrive at the exclusive summer resort, so she had to stay in bed until they came. She couldn't risk her reputation as a beauty by appearing in a kimono.

"At the same hotel there was a girl who had put in her time taking music lessons. Her music was in her trunks that didn't come, and all she had to say was: 'I can't play without my music,' and she still had her reputation intact. But the beauty could say, 'My good looks are all in my trunk,' and still keep her reputation.

"So I don't think we will let Arabella devote herself to the cultivation of beauty. Art or intellect is better, being much easier to get away with."

* * *

Nothing Remarkable.

A woman who had some knowledge of baseball took a friend to a championship contest

"Isn't that fi[illegible]" said the first. "We have a man on ev[illegible] base"

"Why, that [illegible]" said the friend, "so have the[illegible]"

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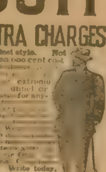

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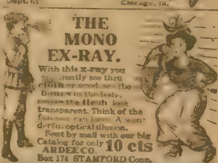

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Golden Jubilee Bargains

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Attention, Contestants

IN THE

W. D. Boyce Company's $4,000 Cash Home Picturegame

START YOUR CHECKING NOW

The Judges in the W. D. Boyce Company's $4,000 Cash Home Picturegame, Judge Charles M. Thomson, of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois; Mr. H. C. Fuller, Assistant Treasurer of The Crane Company, and Mr. Henry S. Henschen, Cashier State Bank of Chicago, whose names stand as an absolute guarantee of honesty and integrity, have decided that the BEST titles to the twenty-four pictures are as follows:

Picture No. 1—SAFETY FIRST.
Picture No. 2—HIS LITTLE JOKE.
Picture No. 3—GRAND PROMOTER.
Picture No. 4—WAR'S EFFECT.
Picture No. 5—AIRSHIP.
Picture No. 6—BRUTE!
Picture No. 7—LOOKING BACKWARD.
Picture No. 8—WORTH WINNING.
Picture No. 9—A BARGAIN.
Picture No. 10—CAREFREE.
Picture No. 11—RUNNING CONVERSATION.
Picture No. 12—HER WISH.
Picture No. 13—INTERRUPTED.
Picture No. 14—EXTREMES MEET.
Picture No. 15—ALL ALONE.
Picture No. 16—THE SERENADERS.
Picture No. 17—ALL IN THE GAME.
Picture No. 18—LOCATING THE TROUBLE.
Picture No. 19—HER WEDDING DAY.
Picture No. 20—ACCEPTED.
Picture No. 21—SKATING.
Picture No. 22—HIS SUITS.
Picture No. 23—AT THE SUMMER RESORT.
Picture No. 24—THE TALKER.

THIS IS THE WAY FOR YOU TO CHECK YOUR SET OF ANSWERS

If you have submitted a REPLY BOOK set of answers, you have cut out, or should have cut out, Page 8 from your REPLY BOOK, and kept it, with a duplicate list of the titles you submitted in the REPLY BOOK. Now is the time to CHECK your Home List with the Official List above and enter the results on your checking sheet.

If you submitted a set of single pictures and coupons, you were told to keep a duplicate set of your answers at home. We publish on this page a CHECKING SHEET which you can use.

The BEST titles to the twenty-four pictures, as selected by the Judges, are published above. You now turn to your duplicate list of answers which you have at home, and also to your CHECKING SHEET. (You either have cut out this **Checking Sheet**, Page 8 in your Reply Book, or you can use the **Checking Sheet** on this page, in case you haven't one, or have mislaid or lost yours.)

You now turn to your duplicate list of titles and compare it with the titles named above. Then on your CHECKING SHEET you note down whether you had the correct answer to Picture No. 1, and how many incorrect. Do the same for Picture No. 2, for Picture No. 3, and so on for all 24 pictures.

You then add your columns up and find out how many correct and how many incorrect answers you had, and the grand total. Your CHECKING SHEET will then show just how many correct, just how many incorrect answers you submitted. Verify your totals, and send your CHECKING SHEET to us to be checked against your set of answers, and you will be notified if you are a winner. **Be sure to sign your name and address on your CHECKING SHEET.**

All checking sheets must be in our hands not later than April 21, 1917, so compare your home list with the list above at once. Fill out your checking sheet and send it to us at once.

THIS IS THE CHECKING SHEET

If you have mislaid or lost yours, or haven't one, cut it out. Compare your duplicate list of titles with the list of titles published above. After comparing the Official List of Best Titles with your Home List, write the results below, and send it to us to be compared with your set of answers. **EXAMPLE:** If you have one correct title and two incorrect titles for Picture No. 1, you would write down on the line of Picture No. 1, the figure "1" under the caption "Number Correct;" and the figure "2" under the caption "Number Incorrect," and so on for all twenty-four pictures. Then you will add them up, and will quickly see how many correct and how many incorrect titles you had. **THEN SEND THIS CHECKING SHEET TO US TO BE COMPARED WITH YOUR SET OF ANSWERS.** Be accurate in comparing your duplicate list of titles with the official list of titles above.

TEAR ALONG THIS LINE

After Comparing the Official List of Best Titles With Your Home List, Write the Results Below and Send to Us.

PICTURE	Number Correct	Number Incorrect	PICTURE	Number Correct	Number Incorrect
No. 1			No. 13		
No. 2			No. 14		
No. 3			No. 15		
No. 4			No. 16		
No. 5			No. 17		
No. 6			No. 18		
No. 7			No. 19		
No. 8			No. 20		
No. 9			No. 21		
No. 10			No. 22		
No. 11			No. 23		
No. 12			No. 24		

Total Correct
Total Incorrect
Grand Total

I hereby affirm that this list is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Name
Address
City
State

Cut out this checking sheet, and after you have filled out same in accordance with instructions given you on this page send it to

Picturegame Editor,
The Farming Business,
500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Illinois

This Checking Sheet must be in our hands not later than April 21, 1917.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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5,000,000
READERS WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

For that tired feeling take a street car.

And many a man who pays cash sleeps on tick.

Grown people tire of their toys just as children do.

Being a lucky animal, the camel never has to hump itself.

No man is tall enough to be above neighborly criticism.

To avenge our wrongs costs more than to protect our rights.

Many a man suffers painful exposure, tho all wrapped up in himself.

About the only blow that strikes a man favorably is his own boast.

Nearly all men are suspicious and nearly all women are superstitious.

When a busy man has leisure he always does some other kind of work.

When a man talks much about himself he has nothing much to talk about.

The man who is in touch with the toothache is out of sympathy with it.

The wall flower at a ball is often the only girl present who can bake bread.

Some men talk more religion in ten minutes than they practice in ten years.

Some men are so unworthy of confidence that their own dogs distrust them.

Some people spend a lot of time in explaining things they know nothing about.

After a girl gets married she begins to lose interest in curl papers and love stories.

By careful observation you will notice that wealth brings happiness—as often as poverty.

Old Man Maguire says a woman always takes the cork out of a bottle by pushing it in.

Perhaps the reason a woman's work is never done is because she employs a domestic to do it.

Political orators talk and talk, but the bright-faced girl on the silver dollar isn't saying a word.

It's surprising how quickly a man recovers from what he imagined was a fatal attack of love.

Often a woman is so inconsistent that after making up her mind as to her age she's unable to stick to it.

Cupid does not take out a license when he goes hunting. The man of whom he makes game has to do that.

It is unwise to judge a man by the criticisms of his enemies. Only his friends can properly denounce him.

If a pessimist happens to be born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he naturally expects it to choke him sooner or later.

If a widower marries a milliner or dressmaker he may be figuring on getting back some of the money his first wife spent.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

Gray and tan will be fashionable colors.

Heavy materials are best for the slip-on blouse.

There are toques made entirely of ostrich feathers.

The entire silhouette promises to be a little narrower and a little closer.

Green in brilliant and refreshing shade is sure to be a popular color in dress fabric as well as accessories.

Beads of all varieties and all colors are used with distinctive and real artistic value as trimming combined with hand embroidery.

The men who make white wash blouses in special designs are getting orders for finely tucked ones of thin cambric, with frills down the front and buttonholes thru which are to be used colored studs. The latter are of turquoise and amethyst, set in rims of gold. This is known as the quoit setting.

For several seasons there have been noted on many of the exclusive suits bands or squares of the quilting done in the self-shade or a contrasting color, and this has been invariably used without any other trimming. It has been predicted that this quaint trimming idea will be smart for Spring and that even the jersey suits will show this old-fashioned needlework as an embellishment.

RECIPES.

GRILL CASSEROLE—Required: One pound of stew meat, or cold cooked meat will do, two sheep's kidneys, two pork sausages, two slices of lean bacon or ham, a few sticks of macaroni, a tomato, onion, carrot, pepper and salt. Cut up the meat into nice pieces, halve the kidneys, roll them with the sausages in flour, salt and pepper. Place all in a casserole; add the vegetables sliced and the macaroni broken up, cover with stock or hot water; season to taste. Cover closely and cook slowly for three hours. Only two hours are required if the meat has been previously cooked. Send to table in the casserole.

PRUNE TAPIOCA—Cut into quarters prunes that have been slowly stewed with sugar and a little grated lemon peel and pour over the fruit when cold the following: Soak a cupful of tapioca in a pint of water for two hours, then cover with rich milk and cook until tender, stirring in, just before removing from the fire, the yolks of two well-beaten eggs, a heaping tablespoonful of granulated sugar and a dusting of grated nutmeg. Cover all with a meringue made from the whites of the eggs and serve cold with a sauce made from the prune sirup.

SEED CAKES—Beat to a cream one cupful of butter and two cupfuls of sugar. Add three tablespoonfuls sweet milk and two tablespoonfuls caraway seed. Sift together two cupfuls of flour and two tablespoonfuls baking powder. Repeat this three times, then stir into the butter, sugar and milk mixture. If not as stiff as it can be beaten, add a little more flour, then turn on to a floured board and roll out lightly, using a floured rolling pin. When thin as a wafer cut into round cakes and bake in a quick oven.

HOLLANDAISE SAUCE—One-half cupful butter, two egg yolks, one and one-half tablespoonfuls lemon juice, one-quarter teaspoonful salt, speck cayenne, one-half cupful boiling water. Cream the butter, add the yolks, one at a time, and heat well. Add the salt, pepper and lemon juice. A short time before serving add the boiling water and stir until the mixture is of the consistency of custard. Serve immediately.

NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

All stockings, irrespective of the material, should be darned with darning silk. Not only does it make a neater darn, but it wears better and does not hurt the foot.

Suggestive of luxury is a day cover for a bed. The cover is fashioned of old rose taffeta quilted in various designs. In a shield frame formed by stitchery is embroidered the owner's monogram in various shades of pink.

When, in cutting out a blouse or other garment from silk, there has been enough material allowed to give a certain amount of leeway in placing the pieces of the pattern on the silk, arranging to keep those pieces as much as possible toward one definite side of the breadth will often result in giving one a long straight strip of silk, enough for a Windsor tie or a bag, when lack of forethought would leave, of the same amount of goods, nothing but small cut pieces, of comparatively little use to the needlewoman.

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

If corned beef is to be served cold allow it to cool in the liquor in which it was boiled.

If you rinse a plate with cold water before breaking eggs on it, add to them a pinch of salt and then stand where there is a current of air, you will have no difficulty in beating them to froth.

When hanging out clothes in cold weather, pin handkerchiefs, laces and all small fine articles on a sheet with common pins. This will save danger of tearing them when taking from line in freezing weather.

There are many things that can be prepared for breakfast the evening before. The fruit can be made ready for the table, the dishes to be used put in the warming oven, the cereal can be put in the fireless cooker and the coffee in the pot ready for the stove.

When you put down a new matting do not cut it to fit the corners, but wet it thoroly with a soft brush or cloth dipped in hot water to which a cupful of salt has been added. When thoroly soaked the matting becomes as pliable as rubber and can be turned under without breaking. This makes a neater finish than cutting and also saves the matting for use in a different-shaped room.

HEALTH NOTES.

For bad bruises—mix five spoonfuls of glycerine and one spoonful of subacetate of lead. Shake up in a bottle and keep corked. Apply some on a piece of lint and cover with a bandage.

Be sure to wash the face with soap and very hot water before retiring to rest when the day has been very foggy. There is no dirt which penetrates into the skin more than dirt brought by fog.

It is almost as important to teach your child to be cheerful as it is to teach him to breathe deep and to brush his teeth daily. Being cheerful aids the digestion, quickens the circulation, in fact, gives tone and vigor to the entire body.

When you are tired or have a slight headache and want to freshen up for the evening, bathe the face and throat in hot perfumed water. Pour some of your favorite toilet water into a small basin of hot water, use a soft woolen or Turkish wash cloth and go slowly over the face and throat with a rotary motion. Pay attention to forehead, temples and back of the ears. You will find it more refreshing than an hour's rest. It will also brighten the eyes and freshen the skin.

Don't Rub It On
Bruises or Sore Muscles

Sloan's Liniment quickly penetrates and soothes *without rubbing*. Cleaner than mussy plasters or ointments, does not stain the skin.

Have a bottle handy for emergency, rheumatic aches and pains, neuralgia, lumbago, gout, strains, sprains and lame back, yield to Sloan's Liniment.

At all druggists, 25c. 50c. and $1.00.

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168,155
LONE SCOUTS

In 73 Weeks 168,155 Boys have taken the following pledge as members of Lone Scouts of America:

"I pledge my allegiance to my flag and the nation for which it stands, with liberty and justice for all. I will 'Do a Useful Thing Each Day,' and be worthy of the name, Lone Scout."

The Lone Scouts of America was incorporated in Washington, District of Columbia, in 1915. At the first meeting of the incorporators, by-laws were adopted and W. D. Boyce was elected **Chief Totem**. The first Lone Scout took the pledge on October 25, 1915.

1 The Lone Scouts of America is for all wide-awake, ambitious boys everywhere. Any boy who can understand the pledge is eligible to membership. The pledge is so worded as to make the organization world-wide, including any boy living under some other flag than the United States flag. The Lone Scouts of America encourages patriotism, but is not a military organization in any sense.

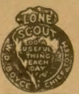
2 The purpose of the Lone Scouts of America is to give the boys all the advantages of the Boy Scout movement (which was started in the United States by W. D. Boyce, Chief Totem of the Lone Scouts) while permitting them to operate alone if it is not convenient for them to belong to Tribes. Woodcraft and Scouting are only a part of the instructions. The Lone Scout motto is: **"Do a Useful Thing Each Day."** Every boy who lives up to this motto is going to be a successful man.

3 There are no membership dues or fees to pay; no expensive equipment for boys or their parents to buy. The Lone Scouts of America is not a money-making proposition. The organization is supported by the sale of its weekly magazine, "Lone Scout," in which instructions are given the Scouts. "Lone Scout" is sold by news agents for 2 cents a copy. Subscription rates, 25 cents four months, 75 cents a year.

4 As a member progresses in his Scout work he is awarded Degrees with appropriate Badges, and these Degrees make up Lodges. Badges of the first three Degrees (Tepee Lodge) are shown on the left. After the Tepee Lodge comes the Totem Pole Lodge. A member in this Lodge is entitled to put up a Lone Scout Totem Pole, upon which is placed a record of his Degrees.

5 In applying for membership, fill out the Application Blank given below, and send it with 2-cent stamp.

W. D. BOYCE, Chief Totem,
500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.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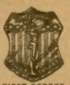
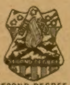
SCOUT
DO A USEFUL THING EACH DAY
W. D. BOYCE CHIEF TOTEM

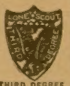
MEMBERSHIP BADGE



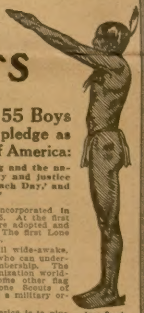
FIRST DEGREE BADGE (Bronze)



SECOND DEGREE BADGE (Bronze)



THIRD DEGREE BADGE (Silver)



Lone Scout Indian

CUT OUT HERE

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP U

CHIEF TOTEM, 500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Date..1917

I am ready, with consent of my parents or guardian, to take the Lone Scout Pledge, which I have read. Herewith find 2 cents in stamps to pay for mailing Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts of America, First Degree Instructions and Tribe Booklet.

Name.. Age...................

Town.. State.................

St. No., P. O., or R. F. D...

THE FAIRY CORNER

WILL AND WON'T.

Will and Won't were two little boys
  Who lived in the land of Stir,
And if you listen, I'll tell you all
  Just what kind of boys they were.

Will was very industrious—
  A boy who was fond of work;
But Won't was lazy as he could be—
  A boy who would always shirk.

When Will was told he must do a thing,
  He did it without delay;
While Won't put off till tomorrow
  The work to be done today.

At last when they were aged men,
  Will had a fortune, and more;
He had the respect of all, but Won't—
  Was begging from door to door.

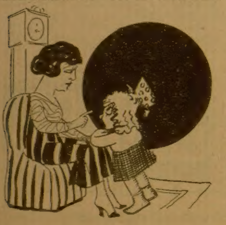
✤

A SCARE.

"If you are not careful, Molly, that wheel of yours will be stolen!"

"Now, mamma, who on earth in this little town would be mean enough?"

"There's no telling," said Mrs. Evans, "but you're altogether too careless; when you come home from school at recess you should not leave it out on the sidewalk. There are always tramps passing thru, and unscrupulous people who wouldn't hesitate to go off with it."



The Story Lady—"When the sleeping beauty awoke after her sleep of a hundred years every one was charmed with her loveliness."

Little Elsie—"She must have been awfully plain to start with if she needed 100 years of beauty sleep."

"Well, it would have to be a person of my size, who could ride it easily, that's all," said Mary, laughing. "Good-by, mummy, dear, nobody wants my own particular Crescent, and I don't believe it would spin along for any one else but me," and Molly mounted and was off, waving her hand as she turned a corner, with that utter disregard of her handle bar which always brought poor Mrs. Evans' heart into her mouth.

Molly stopped on her way back to school for her bosom friend, Annie Heywood, who always rode with her, and the two girls arranged to spend the afternoon on their wheels, for the day was perfect, and the approaching cold weather would cut them off from their favorite pastime, so they made the most of their opportunities.

"I'll go home and leave my books," said Molly, after school, "and you stop for me."

'All right," returned Annie, "but I warn you to hurry. I won't be gone but a minute."

Molly flung herself off her wheel and rushed upstairs. She had not been in the house five minutes, but when she came down her wheel had vanished and there was Annie riding swiftly toward her.

"Get your wheel," called Annie; "we'll go toward Wilson's wood."

"It's gone—it's gone," cried Molly, with something between a sob and a gasp.

"I seen a boy get on it," said a voice near by, which belonged to little Micky Flannigan, the butcher's boy.

"Why didn't you stop him?" asked Molly, excitedly. "Who was it?"

"I dunno," said Mickey, stolidly. "Looked like he owned it."

"Which way did he go?" demanded Molly.

Mickey pointed toward the east. The girls strained their eyes and saw a vanishing speck in the distance.

"Oh!" cried poor Molly, "mamma was right, it was all my own carelessness, and now some one has gone off with it. What shall I do?"

"Take my wheel and follow," said Annie, heroically; "he's bound to turn to his right at the end of the street, and if you go the back way you can head him off. I'll wait here."

So Molly mounted and was off, but the boy on the wheel passed the "heading off" place before she reached it, so he had the start of her in the race. He darted and twisted around street corners, made daring cuts across the road, coasted down hill after hill, always eluding Molly, who was in close pursuit. She could not get a good glimpse of him, but from his looks and the "tough" way in which he wore his cap she was sure he belonged to the 'butcher boy" variety, a constant menace in the little town, for there was quite a gang of them.

Suppose she did overtake him! She never would have courage to claim her wheel, and if she did he would never give it up to one weak girl.

All this time she was going like the wind, and he straight as an arrow in front of her. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes sparkled with excitement.

Suddenly the boy turned into a familiar street—her own! A cry of astonishment escaped her, for he rode directly to the Evans' door and, dismounting, stood cap in hand, smiling and talking with Annie while he waited for her to come up.

"Why, Tom!" she exclaimed, as she recognized her own brother's mischievous freckled face. "How could you?"

"Wasn't it fun? I led you a dance, didn't I? I always wanted to try that jolly little wheel. Much obliged, Molly, for my charming ride; but if you will leave your Crescent standing unguarded on the king's highway you must expect——"

Before he finished his sentence the two girls had gone, but the prank, rough and boyish as it was, taught Molly a lesson which she never forgot.

HOW I DARKENED MY GRAY HAIR

Lady Gives Simple Home Recipe That She Used to Darken Her Gray Hair.

For years I tried to restore my gray hair to its natural color with the prepared dyes and stains, but none of them gave satisfaction and they were all expensive. I finally ran onto a simple recipe which I mixed at home that gives wonderful results. I gave the recipe, which is as follows, to a number of my friends, and they are all delighted with it. To 7 ozs. of water add a small box of Barbo Compound, 1 oz. of bay rum and ¼ oz. of glycerine. These ingredients can be bought at any drug store at very little cost. Use every other day until the hair becomes the required shade. It will not only darken the gray hair, but make it soft and glossy. It is not sticky or greasy and does not rub off.

✤

THE FOOLER FOOLED.

On April Fools' day John Smith woke up early—as early as five o'clock. He was a bright boy of 12 years, and he was always looking for mischief. It was still dark, but so much the better for the mischief—it likes dark places—and John was able to get downstairs before anybody else did and to put pepper in the sugar without being seen.

At six o'clock the family came to breakfast, and John's father was about to put sugar in his coffee. "Oh, wait!" exclaimed John's mother. "I spilled some medicine in the sugar last night and forgot to throw it out." Thus, as his mother disposed of the sugar, Jack's first foolish prank was spoiled.

After breakfast John brought some April Fool candy to his dog, but Rover wasn't interested, and he fared no better with his mother when he offered the candy to her; she was too busy to eat candy that day.

Then came school, and John tried a very old and stupid trick. He put a tack in the teacher's chair while she was out of the room. If she had been an old-fashioned teacher she would have looked for that particular trick on April 1st, but, as it was, she sat down hard on the tack and then she yelled and jumped up so suddenly that she overturned her desk. As soon as things were straightened out she demanded to know who had played that smart trick. Nobody answered at first, but presently a little girl said: "Please, teacher, it was Johnnie Smith that did it."

"John Smith, come here," commanded the angry teacher. John slowly obeyed, pretty well scared, and as he sniffed and sobbed he managed to say, "I didn't mean to, teacher, I didn't mean to!" But the teacher's feelings were too ruffled to be pacified, and she expelled John from school.

When he reached home his mother, who had already heard from the teacher, punished him and sent him to bed. When five o'clock came, however, he begged so hard to get up that his mother let him, and he went outside, where he met a big boy of the school. John hadn't learned his lesson yet, it seemed, and he said as he came up to the big boy, "Look, look at the angels!" The big boy cast his eyes heavenward, and then he fell upon Jack and thrashed him soundly. At this point John became rather discouraged, but it was so arranged by fate that he play one more joke and that a sad one.

After supper the whole family went to the movies. The play was an exciting one, and just as the villain was on the point of killing the hero, John jumped up and shouted "Fire!" Such a rush was never seen in the place before! Children were hurt and people were bruised before the audience could be made to understand that there was no fire and that they were the victims of a silly boy's April Fool joke.

As for John, the next day, proceedings were begun that finally landed him in the reform school. Here he learned better than to carry jokes too far. Such was the outcome of John Smith's April Fool mischief, and it will be some time before he forgets it.

✤

LUNCHING TOGETHER.

A man who was driving a heavy hauling wagon, one morning recently, stopped his horses suddenly and hurried across the street to a bakery wagon. His had been an early breakfast, and now the pangs of hunger increased as he saw the nice, fat, sugar-coated doughnuts.

Returning presently with a five-cent bag of dainties, he accosted one of his horses:

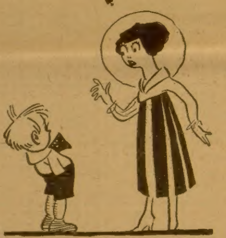
"Hey, Bill, have one on me."

Bill looked lovingly at his owner and greedily swallowed the food.

And Jerry, the other horse, was not forgotten. But when the driver with an "Old pard, have one," offered him one he smelled it carefully, but mindful of his weak digestion, perchance, refused with a gentle shake of his head.

Bill, still hungry, ate the second doughnut, while the driver climbed back on the wagon munching his cake, wholly unconscious that he had shown one observer a beautiful trait of character.

✤



"Mamma, is papa goin' to die an' go to heaven?"

"Why, darling, what put such an absurd idea into your head?"

✤

POLLY'S ADVENTURE.

Polly lived in the West Indies, and her experiences were not very exciting as they went on day by day in her wire cage, but one day there was a hurricane and then Polly had a real story to tell. A writer in St. Nicholas' tells it for her as follows:

"When the storm became very severe the master of Polly's house fled with his family for safety to a more substantial dwelling in another part of town, quite forgetting poor Polly. Trees and roofs and all sorts of objects shot thru the air, and, of course, no ordinary house could stand that, and as the house where Polly lived was not unusual it came down with the rest. The hurricane went about its business finally, and after the wind had subsided and the air was cleared of cocoanut trees, Polly's master went to the place where his house had stood to get, not Polly, but some papers from his safe. He found the roof of his house, part of it; a neighbor's bureau, and a pretty good mattress. The safe was quite out of sight, but he and some men began to dig for it in the ruins, and they had not been digging very long when a voice said: 'Hello! Good morning!' And there was Polly with never a feather missing!"

✤

THINGS I WANT TO KNOW.

A boy borrowed his mother's scissors and left them on the floor when he had done with them, altho charged to put them back in their place. He didn't mean to disobey; he merely forgot. He went out to spin his top, and when he tired of the sport he put the top in his pocket and ran off. He remembered to pick up the top—I wonder why?

This boy was charged to call at the grocery on his way to school and leave an order; but the family waited in vain for their dinner, because it was not left. The boy was very sorry, but he forgot. He remembered, however, to stop on his way home and see about the new skates that were expected at the hardware store. I wonder why that errand was more easily remembered than the other?

I want to know why it is so hard to remember some things and so easy to remember others? I've noticed that the things we remember are the ones we enjoy most, and I wonder if the liking has something to do with the remembering? And if this is so, are we not to blame for the forgetting? Because if we wanted to do right and meet all our duties, just as much as we want to have a good time, we should not be apt to forget.

Your memory is a sentinel that should be always on duty, and it is a poor excuse for a sentinel to say, "Oh, I was asleep!" He had no business to be asleep, and you should teach him better.

✤

A CLEVER DOG.

An English newspaper is responsible for the following story:

A man who liked hot rolls for breakfast had a very clever dog. Every morning he would put a penny in his dog's mouth and say, "Baker."

The dog would then go to the baker's, place his paws on the counter, and present the penny to the proprietor, who, taking the coin, would then place a bag containing a roll in the dog's mouth. This the dog would safely carry to his master.

One day the dog had, as usual, brought his penny to the baker's counter.

The man, in order to see what the dog would do, took a halfpenny roll and putting it into a bag, placed the latter, as usual, in the dog's mouth.

The dog put down the bag on the counter and went out and fetched a policeman.

✤

FOR HIS OWN GOOD.

Little Bobbie was full of mischief, and during his first year at school hardly a day passed that he was not sent to stand in the corner.

When the schoolhouse burned down and a new one was immediately begun the little boy went to his father, who was county superintendent.

"Don't you think we could get the builder to build a round schoolhouse this time, father?" he said.

"Why, son?" his father asked, in astonishment.

"Because," the little fellow answered, "I'm getting very tired of corners!"

✤

GOOD SPELLERS.

Teacher—"Now, boys, I want to see if any of you can make a complete sentence out of two words, both having the same sound to the ear."

First boy—"I can, Miss Smith."

Teacher—"Very well, Robert. Let us hear your sentence."

First Boy—"Write right."

Teacher—"Very good."

Second Boy—"Miss Smith, I can beat that. I can make three words of it—Wright, write right."

Third Boy (excitedly)—"Hear this—Wright, write rite right."

✤

THE HARE.

The hare is in our fastest set
  A popular young beau;
It's clear that he's a social pet,
  He's always on the go.
He's sensitive, so have a care,
  And do not ever cut the hare.

Dry, Hoarse or Painful Coughs Quickly Ended

Home-Made Remedy that Saves You $2—Does the Work Thoroughly.

The prompt and positive action of this simple, inexpensive home-made remedy in quickly healing the inflamed or swollen membranes of the throat, chest or bronchial tubes and breaking up tight coughs has caused it to be used in more homes than any other cough remedy. Under its healing, soothing influence, chest soreness goes, phlegm loosens, breathing becomes easier, tickling in throat stops and you get a good night's restful sleep. The usual throat and chest colds are conquered by it in 24 hours or less. Nothing better for bronchitis, hoarseness, croup, whooping cough, bronchial asthma or winter coughs.

To make this splendid cough syrup, pour 2½ ounces of Pinex (50 cents worth), into a pint bottle and fill the bottle with plain granulated sugar syrup and shake thoroughly. You then have a full pint—a family supply—of a much better cough syrup than you could buy ready-made for $2.50. Keeps perfectly and children love its pleasant taste.

Pinex is a special and highly concentrated compound of genuine Norway pine extract, combined with guaiacol and is known the world over for its promptness, ease and certainty in overcoming stubborn coughs and chest colds.

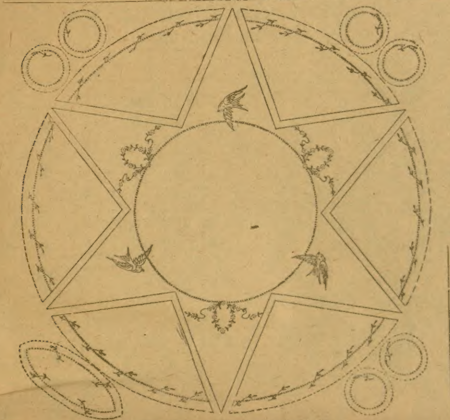
To avoid disappointment ask your druggist for "2½ ounces of Pinex" with full directions, and don't accept anything else. Guaranteed to give absolute satisfaction or money promptly refunded. The Pinex Co., 204 Main St., Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Ledger Embroidery

We call the attention of every woman to the beauty of the patterns displayed from week to week, and wish to impress upon each one the splendid quality of material that makes our offer a great bargain in every case. Every offer is complete. You can finish it up without buying anything extra. These designs are stamped on the best quality cloth, and every set comes to you complete, exactly as described. You are sure to find many articles that you want if you watch the Ledger each week, and it is so easy to get them. Any person can get one or all of the designs shown by sending us the amount of subscriptions to either the Chicago Ledger or Saturday Blade, required in the description under each article.

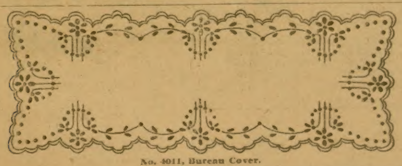
SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Either the Chicago Ledger or Saturday Blade $1.00 a year each; 6 months for 50 cents. The Blade and Ledger together $1.50 a year (52 issues); 6 months for 75 cents; 4 months 50 cents.



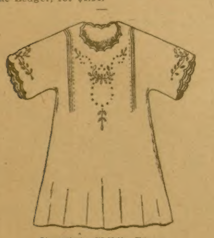
No. 5008, Diamond-shaped Luncheon Set.

NO. 5008, DIAMOND-SHAPED LUNCHEON SET.—The hostess entertaining at luncheon or afternoon tea will thoroly enjoy the use of this unusual set of linens, showing the bluebirds. This set consists of a diamond-shaped lunch cloth, 34x34 inches; six doilies, 4x4 inches; tray cloth, 4x10 inches, and six 10-inch napkins, all of which are plainly stamped in blue on white linen. We also include six skeins of embroidery floss in this offer. Given for $1.50 in subscriptions to the Blade and the Ledger.

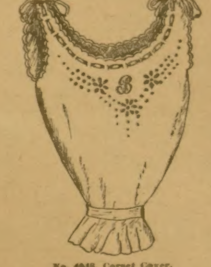


No. 4011, Bureau Cover.

NO. 4011, BUREAU COVER—Conventional pattern, the design is stamped on 17x52-inch white linen. We include four skeins of cotton floss for embroidering design. Given for one year's subscription, new or renewal, to the Blade and the Ledger, for $1.50.



No. 5070, Child's Dress.

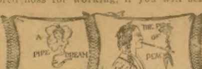


No. 4048, Corset Cover.

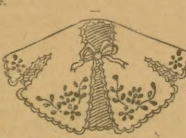
NO. 5070, CHILD'S DRESS—Beautifully designed and stamped on 1⅛ yards of white lawn or nainsook. We include three skeins of cotton floss for embroidering design. Sent with one year's subscription, new or renewal, to the Blade and the Ledger for $1.50.

NO. 4048, CORSET COVER—This modish corset cover is stamped on a fine quality of white nainsook, and we include three skeins of cotton floss for working the design. This will be sent for a year's subscription, new or renewal, $1.00, to the Blade or the Ledger.

NOS. 5061 AND 5062, SMOKER PILLOW TOPS.—If you intend to give a sofa pillow top to your brother or to a friend to help make his room cozy, give him one of these smoker pillow tops, which are tinted in elaborate colors on 17x21-inch tan ticking. You may have your choice of either of these pillow tops, including a back and four skeins of colored floss for working, if you will send us $1.00 for one year's subscription to the Blade or the Ledger. Order by number.



Nos. 5061 and 5062, Smoker Pillow Tops.



No. 2005, Baby's Kimono.

NO. 2005, BABY'S KIMONO—Conventional design, is stamped on white linen. We also include three skeins of cotton floss for embroidering the design. This will be given for $1.00 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to either the Blade or the Ledger.

* * *

Truth or Fiction?

"I tell you right now," spouted the man from Lake Forest, "this fiction stuff that the girls read nowadays doesn't do them any good. It gives them the wrong idea of life."

"Oh," replied the Woodland Park resident, "I think it does them good. It consoles them for what they lack in real life by giving them a dream life that makes them happy."

"No," replied the man from Lake Forest, "this book life that's full of stuff you can't have in real life makes you feel bad because you can't have it.

"Now look here. I shall read aloud a passage from this volume: 'Evangelina saw the last straggling rig go away for the picnic, and she heard the whistle of the departing steamboat, and so she went into her little room, the room that had been the scene of so many tears and self-confidences, and had a good cry.

"'Then feeling better she arose and resumed her household duties. She was very fond of birds and bees, was Evangelina, and she strolled out into the garden. While she was engaged in petting her favorite ostrich that always came running affectionately at her approach, she heard a sound in the air.

"'Was it a hawk? The pigeons flew to the girl for protection, alighting on her beautiful shoulders, and making a charming picture.

"'The sound came nearer. It was an airship! Over her head it circled.

"'And all this time the picnic was going on. The great boat had discharged its cargo of merrymakers, who were romping over the green sward of the island. Harold Niceboob alone did not join in the fun. He sighed and shook his head. He missed Vangie so!'

"Now is this going to be a fiction story, or is it going to be life?"

"If it is to be a fiction story, all right. The airship man stops, picks Evangelina up and wafts her away to the picnic.

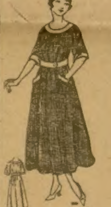
"But if it is real life the airship buzzes right along and doesn't even hesitate. If the girl has consumed much fiction she feels that she has been cheated out of something she never had a chance to get."

PATTERN COUPONS FREE!

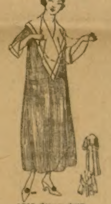
Hundreds of Patterns to Select From

The great difficulty in making one's own garments is to get suitable patterns. Our women readers could make many pretty and useful things for themselves and their children if they could get well-made patterns. We have arranged to give our readers a pattern service unexcelled.

We have a splendid offer of the best and most fashionable patterns that can be produced by the greatest designers of New York and Paris, and what is more, these patterns will be within the reach of every one, and every one will have a wide selection to choose from. **Read our splendid offer below.**



9550 Dress or apron
34 or 36, 38 or 40,
42 or 44 bust.
Price 15 cts.



9362 House Gown.
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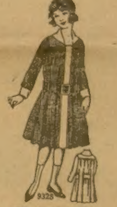
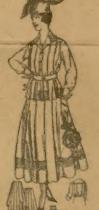
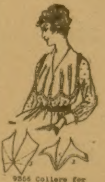


9328 Girl's Dress
8 to 14 years.
Price 15 cts.

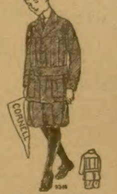


9347 Box Plaited
Blouse 34 to 42 bust
Price 15 cents.

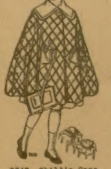
9346 Skirt with Box
Plaits, 24 to 32
waist.
Price 15 cts.



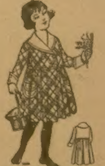
9356 Collars for
Coats or Dresses
one size.
Price 10 cts.



9345 Boy's Norfolk
Suit 8 to 14 years.
Price 15 cents.



9349 Child's Cape,
2, 4 and 6 years.
Price 10 cents.



9360 Child's Empire
Dress 4 to 10 yrs.
Price 10 cts.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it: To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making, with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

We treat old and new customers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber send in a dollar and we will send you the five pattern coupons and extend your subscription one year from the time it now expires.

To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

If you wish any pattern from those advertised in this issue, mark the number and size on the margin and we will retain a coupon for each pattern we send you when we send you the Coupon Book. (Order by size and number.) **Coupons good for six months.**

A Genuine Rupture Cure Sent On Trial To Prove It

Don't Wear A Truss Any Longer

After Thirty Years' Experience I Have Produced An Appliance for Men, Women and Children That Actually Cures Rupture

Are You Ruptured?

If so, the BROOKS APPLIANCE is made for You; You and all other Men, Women and Children who are sufferers from this annoying and dangerous trouble. That truss you have been wearing—one of many you have tried—chafed and irritated you and was worse than nothing. It had springs and pads and harness and straps and fixings galore and was continually getting out of shape—slipping down or working up and always needing attention. Then, there were salves and washes and ointments to make the case worse and harder to bear. I want to say that you will find none of these annoyances and vexations in the BROOKS APPLIANCE. At least they are reduced to a minimum. This APPLIANCE was made with a view to eliminate, to do away with, just such trouble. I would have been foolish to work half a lifetime, thinking out and perfecting a thing that had no advantage or was not better than scores of other inventions upon the market. In my APPLIANCE you will find the old objectionable features LEFT OUT. You will find it easy to wear. You will scarcely realize you are wearing it. There is no binding, drawing and slipping out of place. It does its work effectively and with comfort to the wearer. I want you to read my book, in which I have taken pains to give full particulars about it. Then, there are a few letters printed in it—selected at random from among hundreds written by men and women who have been cured. You can write these folks and see what they say. If I were you I would see to this matter without waiting. You can put off some things without running much risk, but a rupture is a dangerous proposition to neglect. A rupture is not only bad and serious of itself, but it leads to things infinitely worse. Fill out coupon and mail TODAY. Tomorrow will do, but today is better.

Don't Make the Child Wear a Truss Through Life

I Want to Reach the Parents of Every Ruptured Child in the Country.

The Truss Is a Flesh Torturing Invention Fit Only as a Relic of Barbarity.

I WANT them to know about the Automatic Air Cushion Rupture Appliance that I make for children who are afflicted in this way.

My Appliance can be put on any child with perfect safety to the little one. For growing children there is nothing better to be had—no matter how much you pay—than my Appliance.

The Brooks Appliance Cured His Rupture. Now He Is as Sound and Whole as if He Had Never Been Ruptured.

I want the parents or others who may have children in their care to understand that there should be no delay in getting proper help for ruptured children.

Every day that the rupture is allowed to go on without the right means of correcting it—just so much harder will it be for the child to get rid of it.

No ruptured child can ever be free from the thought of the rupture and it is not fair to any child not to have an equal chance with other children.

The above is C. E. Brooks of Marshall, Mich., the Inventor, who has been curing rupture for over 30 years. If ruptured write him today.

If you have tried most everything else, come to me. Where others fail is where I have my greatest success. Send attached coupon today and I will send you free my illustrated book on rupture and its cure, showing my Appliance and giving you prices and names of many people who have tried it and were cured. It is instant relief when all others fail. Remember, I use no salves, no harness, no lies.

I send on trial to prove what I say is true. You are the judge and once having seen my illustrated book and read it you will be as enthusiastic as my hundreds of patients whose letters you may also read. Fill out free coupon below and mail today. It's well worth your time whether you try my appliance or not.

No matter what we may wish to think—ruptured children do **not** have an equal chance.

Common trusses do not help.

Thousands of men and women know that from their own experience with such trusses.

But it is not necessary for children to wear harsh, cumbersome, steel trusses any more.

You may have had to wear something like this but don't make your child do it. Give the child something better.

My Appliance is better and I want to prove it to you.

I will make an Appliance to the child's measure, send it on TRIAL—put it into your hands to see and use and then you can say whether it is what I claim or not.

The Automatic Air Cushion conforms with every movement of the child; there is an even, gentle pressure which gradually binds the broken parts together—as you would bind a broken limb—and then no matter how much the child jumps, runs, rolls over or falls down—the pressure is kept up just the same—always drawing the parts together.

Write me today and get all the information—send the coupon.

Others Failed But The Appliance Cured

C. E. Brooks,
Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir:—

Your Appliance did all you claim for the little boy and more, for it cured him sound and well. We let him wear it for about a year in all, although it cured him 3 months after he had begun to wear it. We had tried several other remedies and got no relief, and I shall certainly recommend it to friends, for we surely owe it to you. Yours respectfully,

WM. PATTERSON.
No. 717 S. Main St., Akron, O.

Pennsylvania Man Thankful

Mr. C. E. Brooks,
Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir:—

Perhaps it will interest you to know that I have been ruptured six years and have always had trouble with it till I got your Appliance. It is very easy to wear, fits neat and snug, and is not in the way at any time, day or night. In fact, at times I did not know I had it on; it just adapted itself to the shape of the body and seemed to be a part of the body, as it clung to the spot, no matter what position I was in.

It would be a veritable God-send to the unfortunates who suffer from rupture if all could procure the Brooks Rupture Appliance and wear it. They would certainly never regret it.

My rupture is now all healed up and nothing ever did it but your Appliance. Whenever the opportunity presents itself I will say a good word for your Appliance, and also the honorable way in which you deal with ruptured people. It is a pleasure to recommend a good thing among your friends or strangers. I am,

Yours very sincerely,
JAMES A. BRITTON.
80 Spring St., Bethlehem, Pa.

Remember

I send my Appliance on trial to prove what I say is true. You are to be the judge. Fill out free coupon below and mail today.

Ten Reasons Why

You Should Send For Brooks' Rupture Appliance.

1. It is absolutely the only Appliance of the kind on the market today, and in it are embodied the principles that inventors have sought after for years.
2. The Appliance for retaining the rupture cannot be thrown out of position.
3. Being an air cushion of soft rubber it clings closely to the body, yet never blisters or causes irritation.
4. Unlike the ordinary so-called pads used in other trusses, it is not cumbersome or ungainly.
5. It is small, soft and pliable, and positively cannot be detected through the clothing.
6. The soft, pliable bands holding the Appliance do not give one the unpleasant sensation of wearing a harness.
7. There is nothing about it to get foul, and when it becomes soiled it can be washed without injuring it in the least.
8. There are no metal springs in the Appliance to torture one by cutting and bruising the flesh.
9. All of the material of which the Appliances are made is of the very best that money can buy, making it a durable and safe Appliance to wear.
10. My reputation for honesty and *fair dealing is so thoroughly established by an experience of over thirty years of dealing with the public, and my prices are so reasonable, my terms so fair, that there certainly should be no hesitancy in sending free coupon today.*

Cured at the Age of 76

Mr. C. E. Brooks, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir:—

I began using your Appliance for the cure of rupture (I had a pretty bad case) I think in May, 1905. On November 20, 1905, I quit using it. Since that time I have not needed or used it. I am well of rupture and rank myself among those cured by the Brooks Discovery, which, considering my age, 76 years, I regard as remarkable.

Very sincerely yours,
SAM A. HOOVER.
High Point, N. C.

Child Cured In Four Months

C. E. Brooks,

Dear Sir:—The baby's rupture is altogether cured, thanks to your appliance and we are so thankful to you. If we could only have known of it sooner our little boy would not have had to suffer near as much as he did. He wore your brace a little over four months and has not worn it now for six weeks. Yours very truly,

ANDREW EGGENBERGER.
21 Jansen St., Dubuque, Iowa.

Confederate Veteran Cured

Commerce, Ga., R. F. D. No. 11.
Mr. C. E. Brooks

Dear Sir:—I am glad to tell you that I am now sound and well and can plough or do any heavy work. I can say your Appliance has effected a permanent cure. Before getting your Appliance I was in a terrible condition and had given up all hope of ever being any better. If it hadn't been for your Appliance I would never have been cured. I am sixty-eight years old and served three years in Eckle's Artillery, Oglethorpe Co. I hope God will reward you for the good you are doing for suffering humanity.

Yours sincerely,
H. D. BANKS.

Free Information Coupon

C. E. BROOKS, 316A, State St., Marshall, Mich.

Please send me by mail, in plain wrapper, your illustrated book and full information about your Appliance for the cure of rupture.

Name..

City..

R. F. D.............................State..............................